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Galaxy High School

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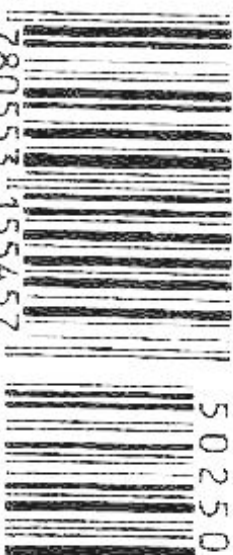


ANN HODGMAN

Based on the hit television series GALAXY HIGH SCHOOL

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EARTH WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!

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There was an excited murmur from the crowd. "That's my cue!" Doyle whispered to Aimee. He stepped forward.

"Now, ladies, cool down," he said soothingly. "I know you've never met an Earth boy before, but relax. There's enough of me for everybody—"

The girls screamed and squealed. As one, they thudded toward Doyle and knocked him down in their rush to get to Aimee.

"Here at Galaxy High," Milo explained, "boys outnumber the girls three to one. *You're* nothing special. *She* is!"

Doyle was beginning to get the feeling that life at Galaxy High was going to be a little different from what he'd expected. . . .

GALAXY HIGH SCHOOL

Based on the Television Series
GALAXY HIGH SCHOOL
A Production of TMS Entertainment, Inc.
Executive Producer YUTAKA FUJIOKA
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ANN HODGMAN
Based on the Television Series
Galaxy High School



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GALAXY HIGH SCHOOL

A Bantam Book / September 1987

"Welcome to Galaxy High"

Based on the teleplay by Chris Columbus

"Those Eyes, Those Lips"

Based on the teleplay by Karen Willson and Chris Weber

"The Beef Who Would Be King"

Based on the teleplay by David Wiemers and Ken Koonce

"Dollars and Sense"

Based on the teleplay by Ken Koonce and David Wiemers

"Beach Blanket Blow Up"

Based on the teleplay by Ken Koonce and David Wiemers

"Founder's Day"

Based on the teleplay by Larry DiTillio

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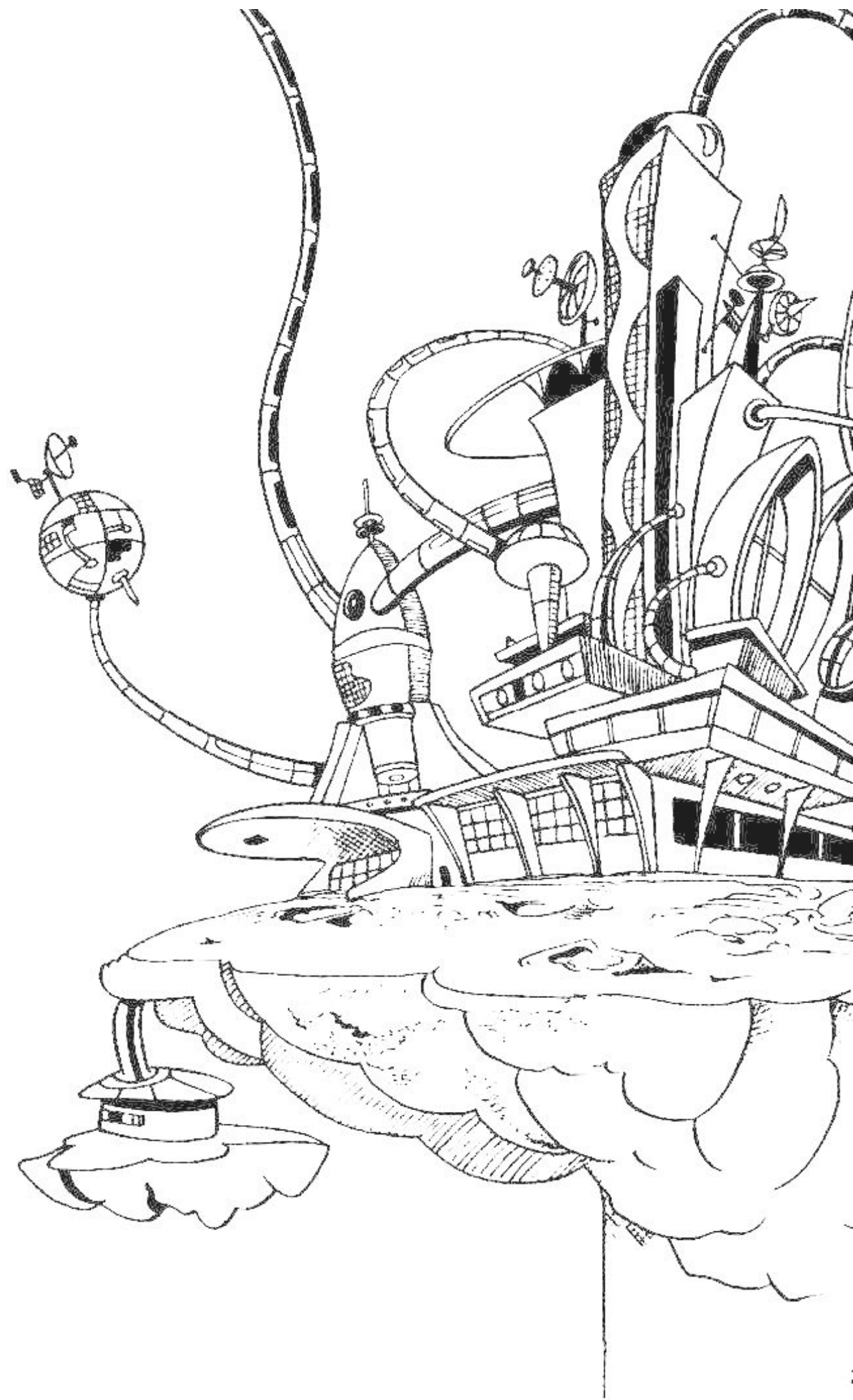


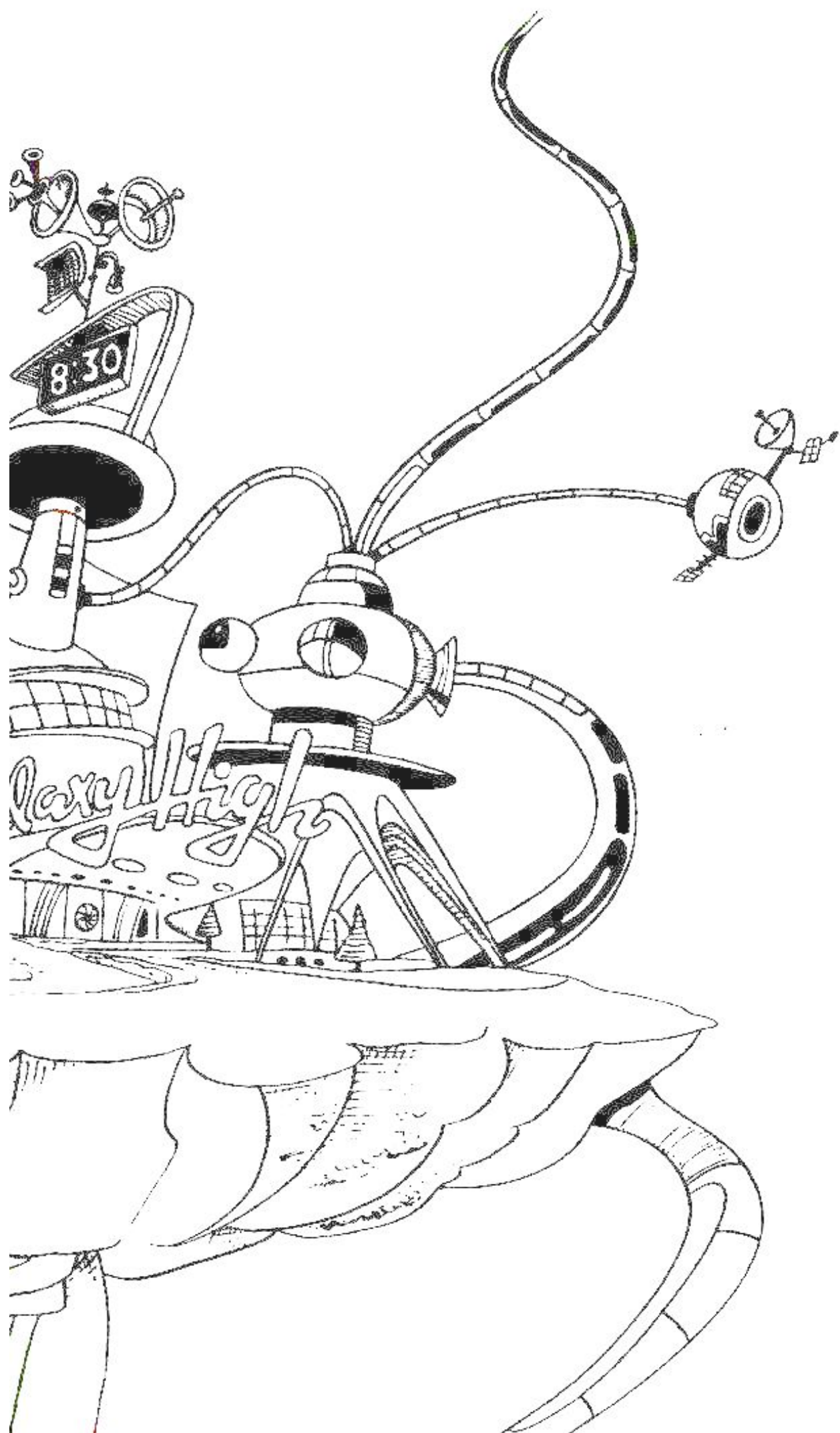
PROLOGUE

Aimee Brightower clutched her duffel bag filled with schoolbooks and stared at the huge building ahead of her. *I'm finally at Galaxy High!* she thought.

Neon lights glowed from the school and the four satellites that were connected to it. There was an orbiting shopping mall, a drive-in three-dimensional movie theater, a five-hundred-lane bowling alley, and even a pizza parlor!

Aimee felt a little nervous. Back on Earth, she'd been the smartest kid in her high school. That was why she'd been chosen as one of Earth's first two interplanetary exchange students. But studying hard hadn't left too much time for making friends.





She thought about all the alien creatures she'd meet at Galaxy High. *Will I fit in?* she wondered.

She looked over at Doyle Cleverlobe, the other exchange student from Earth. He'd been picked to go to Galaxy High because he was a star athlete. She and Doyle had gone to the same Earth high school, but they didn't know each other very well. Aimee thought Doyle was cute, but a little stuck on himself.

Right now, though, Doyle was studying Galaxy High School as intently as Aimee had. He was trying to pick out the football field. He hoped Galaxy High's team was as good as his old one. He'd led the Presley Hound Dogs to an undefeated season the year before.

Wait a minute, Doyle thought suddenly. What if aliens don't play football? How will I ever make it at Galaxy High?

Then he noticed Aimee looking at him. He tried to look as calm and cool as possible. "Hey, Aim," he said.

Aimee sighed. "Yes, Doyle?"

"I've been thinking. When we get there, I don't want you following me around, expecting me to show you the ropes." That seemed like a reasonable request to Doyle.

"Following *you* around?" Aimee asked. Her voice dripped with sarcasm.

"Yeah," Doyle said, not noticing Aimee's

tone of voice. "I can't let the alien girls get the wrong idea—know what I mean?"

"You don't have to worry about me," Aimee snapped. "I won't go anywhere near you!"

Doyle shrugged and opened the door that led to the high school.

"WHOA!" he yelled as he and Aimee were whooshed inside a long, curved tube. It was like riding a roller coaster without any seats. Up and down they lurched, until they'd reached the top floor. The whooshertube door opened again, and they stumbled out.

Standing in front of them was a short, pudgy boy wearing glasses and a nerdy-looking white shirt. He could have been any kid from Earth, except for one thing. Six things, actually—his arms.

"Hello!" he squeaked. "I'm Milo De Venus, junior class president. Welcome to Galaxy High!" He offered Doyle and Aimee all six of his hands to shake.

Aimee and Doyle looked at each other. Doyle cleared his throat. "You know, Aimee," he whispered weakly, "maybe we humans should stick together."



CHAPTER ONE

Welcome to Galaxy High

"Come on! Let me give you a tour of our school!" Milo De Venus said cheerfully.

They followed Milo through the halls and stopped in front of a bank of lockers. At first glance, they seemed like ordinary lockers. Then Milo reeled off their numbers. The lockers stepped forward, their doors popped open, and they began to talk!

X234V9 smiled at Aimee. "Welcome!" it cooed. "I'll carry your books, help you with your homework . . . I'll answer your every need."

Aimee smiled back and put her books neatly inside the locker. Then Doyle tossed the sports uniforms he'd brought from Earth inside Z4229Q. It spat them out in his face.

"You wanna keep books inside of me, fine. But that's it! No clothes! No food! Nothin' but books!" it growled.

Milo gave Doyle an apologetic look. "Sorry about that," he said. "He was the only other locker who would take an Earth person. Come on, I'll show you the gym. There's a girls' outeraerobics class in progress there."

Doyle's eyes were wide with excitement. "Girls' gym class? All RIGHT!" he crowed, and raced down the hall.

"This is *gym*?" Aimee asked when they got there. Rock music was shaking the walls, and the strangest collection of beings she'd ever seen was dancing to the beat. The only things she recognized were the gym suits. They looked just like the ones on Earth.

"Ladies, excuse me!" Milo piped shrilly. "Meet Doyle and Aimee, our exchange students from Earth!"

There was an excited murmur from the crowd. "That's my cue!" Doyle whispered to Aimee. He stepped forward.

"Now, ladies, cool down," he said soothingly. "I know you've never met an Earth boy before, but relax. There's enough of me for everybody—"

The girls screamed and squealed. As one, they thudded toward Doyle and knocked him down in their rush to get to Aimee.

Slowly Doyle got to his feet and brushed the dust off his clothes. He turned to Milo, looking

dazed. "I thought the girls would go nuts over me!" he said.

"Are you kidding?" Milo answered. "Here at Galaxy High, boys outnumber the girls three to one. *You're* nothing special. *She* is!"

Now Aimee was completely surrounded by a flock of admiring students, all clamoring to get her attention.

"Girls! Girls!" bellowed the gym teacher, who was half woman and half horse. She stamped her hoof on the floor. "Back to outer-aerobics!"

"We'd better go," Milo said. "I still have lots to show you."

"Good-bye, Aimee! Good-bye!" called the girls as the three visitors left the gym.

Aimee turned to Doyle. Her eyes were shining. "Aren't they sweet?" she asked.

"Yeah. Real sweet," he said sourly.

He was beginning to get the feeling that life at Galaxy High was going to be a little different from what he'd expected.

Things didn't get any better for Doyle in homeroom. The teacher, Ms. McBrain, was a blue-skinned woman with a huge, lightbulb-like head and a nose like a stethoscope.

"I'm Doyle," he told her with a dazzling smile. "Might I say that you are even more beautiful than I've heard?"

Ms. McBrain just looked at him. "And might



I say that you couldn't be more stupid than I've heard?" She frowned at him, then turned to Aimee. "It's such a pleasure to meet you, Aimee. Your record is outstanding! As principal of Galaxy High, I'm pleased to have you at our school."

Aimee glowed with pleasure. Ms. McBrain called out, "Blackboard! Please show us the plans in the files for these students!"

A blackboard robot with arms wheeled itself forward. "Yes, we do have plans for these Earthlings," it boomed. Its voice was like a game-show host's. "Aimee, because of your excellent grades, you are the recipient of a Galaxy High School scholarship."

Aimee squealed in delight. Galaxy High was turning out to be better than her wildest dreams.

"And, to help you get to your classes, Aimee, you will have a new, Xenon X-5000, Turbo-Space Coupe de Ville." The blackboard opened a curtain. Behind it was a bright pink, sleek convertible spaceship. Aimee nearly fainted.

Doyle stepped forward eagerly. "Hey, what about me?"

The blackboard sighed. "Yes, Doyle. Because of your incredibly poor record, your irresponsibility and laziness, you'll have to take a part-

time job at Luigi's Lunar Pizza Parlor . . . to help pay for your tuition."

Doyle scowled. "No scholarship? Do I at least get a spaceship?"

The blackboard waved its arms. "You are the recipient of a used, thirty-seven-year-old . . . skateboard."

"It's not fair!" Doyle blurted. "I'm going back to Earth."

Ms. McBrain's skin went from light blue to navy. "I'm afraid that's impossible," she said. "Galaxy High is your last chance to graduate!"

As lunchtime approached, Doyle's spirits perked up. Then he took a look at the Galaxy High cafeteria. Tentacled pink alien women were serving globs of purple food to the weirdest collection of aliens he'd ever seen. He decided to start dieting that day.

He noticed that Aimee was sitting at the most crowded table in the room, surrounded by admiring girls.

"Hi! I'm Booeey Bubblehead," one told her. "Who are you?" The girl had a transparent head. Aimee could see her brain floating inside it.

"I'm Aimee," said Aimee.

"Hi. I'm Booeey Bubblehead," Booeey went on. Aimee gave her a puzzled smile as the other girls introduced themselves. One was Wendy Garbo, the sultry school vamp. Wendy seemed to have staked out every male in school as her own

private property. And then there was Gilda Gossip. She had five mouths that never took a break.

Aimee was laughing and talking so excitedly that she didn't notice when an adorably fuzzy little creature flew up behind her. Frantically he zoomed around her head. When he finally had her attention, he started blowing kisses at her. Tiny red hearts floated like bubbles from his mouth. His blue eyes were swimming with love.

"Buzz off, Creep," Wendy Garbo said.

"Oh, it's okay." Aimee giggled. "He's kind of cute."

The Creep gave a sigh of rapture. "I'm never going to leave your side," he breathed. He took a tiny gold chain, hooked it around Aimee's neck, and locked it.

Aimee yanked at the chain. It didn't budge. "Hey, unlock this thing!" she said.

"Nope," said the Creep. "Then we won't be together twenty-four hours a day."

"But I don't *want* to be together twenty-four hours a day!" Aimee protested.

"But I do!" the Creep said, beaming. "And only I know the combination!"

Doyle was watching from the other side of the room. He shook his head and glanced around the cafeteria. Then he squared his shoulders and walked confidently toward the nearest table.

Two alien kids glowered up at him. One was Rotten Roland, a boy made entirely of stinking,

rotten eggs. The other was Beef Bonk, a giant, red, lizard-like boy. Beef wore a shirt that said, Earth Stinks!

Doyle smiled sunnily and sat down. He heard a scream from somewhere underneath him and leaped back to his feet.

"Hey, pal, watch where you sit!" grumbled a voice from Doyle's chair. He looked down and saw a shapeless, green little creature who looked like a puddle of melting ice cream, but was actually a student named Earl Eccchhh.

Doyle didn't know what to say. But Beef did.

"Earth stinks!" he shouted.

"Oh, yeah?" Doyle challenged him.

Milo could hear Doyle all the way across the cafeteria. He looked up from where he was sitting with Aimee.

As Milo and Aimee watched, horrified, Beef scooped up Doyle and hurled him into the air. He flew over their heads . . . and sailed into the kitchen . . . and shot into the Space-O-Matic Frymaker.

Milo dashed up to the machine. Into his hands fell a pile of french fries with two eyes and a mouth. The mouth opened.

"*Now* what am I supposed to do?" Doyle asked.

Milo raced down the corridor, the pile of fries cupped in his hands. "Just relax, Doyle," he said,

panting. "I'm taking you to the science teacher, Professor Icenstein."

"I just hope he can help me!" Doyle told him. "Milo, why didn't you warn me about those guys?"

"I didn't get a chance," Milo said sadly. "That was the Bonk Bunch—Beef Bonk is their leader. *Nobody* makes friends with them!"

They arrived at the science lab, where nearly a hundred air conditioners worked to keep the temperature at twenty below zero. Professor Icenstein was from the planet Frostor, and he was made entirely of ice.

After Milo explained Doyle's problem, the professor tossed Doyle into the molecular reconstructor. Within moments, Doyle was restored to his old self.

He raced to a mirror and patted his arms, legs, and face to make sure he was really there. "Whew!" he said. "Thanks, Professor!"

School was out for the day, and most of the kids from Galaxy High were in Luigi's Lunar Pizza Parlor. They were dancing and enjoying themselves—all except Doyle and Milo.

Doyle was sweating under the weight of a huge tray of pizzas. Milo was turning out more pizzas as fast as his six hands could.

"For this I was reconstructed?" Doyle muttered under his breath. "Here you are," he said

aloud as he delivered a pizza to two giant fish-kids.

"What is this?" one of them yelped. "We didn't order anchovies! Take it back!"

Doyle rushed back to the counter and grabbed another pizza. "This one's for Table Seven," Milo said.

Doyle almost dropped the tray when he saw who was at Table Seven.



It was Aimee—an entirely new Aimee. Her brown hair had been spiked and colored pink. Her skirt and sweater had been replaced with a latex jumpsuit. She looked adorable, and she knew it.

"Aimee!" Doyle gasped. "What happened to you?"

Booey Bubblehead giggled. "We took Aimee style shopping." Suddenly she looked confused. "Didn't we?"

"But she looks so . . . so different!" Doyle stammered.

"Yeah," the Creep said. "Isn't she a fox?" He looked sadly at the broken chain trailing from his neck. "If only the barber hadn't cut this . . ."

Doyle still looked dazed. Then Aimee reached out and grabbed one of the pieces of pizza he was carrying.

She took a bite. "We ordered extra cheese," she said. "Take it back, please."

Fuming, Doyle marched back to the counter. "More cheese," he snapped. He glanced back at the new Aimee.

"I don't get it, Milo," he said. "I was so popular back on Earth. I get here, and everybody treats me like—like—"

"An alien?" Milo suggested, piling cheese on the pizza.

Doyle nodded sadly. He picked up the pizza and carried it back to Aimee's table.

But Aimee wasn't there. She'd forgotten all about the pizza. She was dancing madly with the Creep.

Now Doyle was furious. He shoved the Creep out of the way and started dancing with Aimee himself.

"Why the cold shoulder?" he asked her angrily. "You've been ignoring me ever since we got here!"

Aimee gave him a demure smile. "You *asked* me to leave you alone. Remember?"

Before Doyle could answer, someone tapped his shoulder to cut in. Someone with huge red hands. Beef Bonk!

"Do you mind?" Doyle told Beef. "This is a private discussion!"

Beef glared down at Doyle. "Tomorrow," he snarled. "After school. Me and you. Zuggle-ball."

"Zuggleball?" Doyle asked Milo, who'd come up next to him.

"I—I think on Earth you call it hockey," Milo said. "But here you only need three points to win. And the puck is alive."

After school the next day, kids crowded into the stands in the Galaxy High gym. As Doyle and Beef skated onto the ice-covered gym floor, the crowd erupted into cheers.

The referee skated up to the center of the floor. In his hand was a furry, softball-sized animal with a big smile.

"The Zuggle! The Zuggle!" the crowd chanted. The Zuggle giggled in anticipation.

The referee dropped him onto the ice.

"C'mon, hit! Hit me!" squealed the Zuggle. "You know you want to hit me!"

The game was on.

Within seconds Doyle had scored a point. The huge, whale-like net slurped up the Zuggle and shot it back out onto the ice. In the stands, Aimee leaped to her feet.

Then Beef took his Zuggle-stick and whacked the skates out from under Doyle. Doyle fell to his knees.

"And it's Beef playing dirty," came the peppy voice from the loudspeaker. "It's not fair, but that's Zuggleball!"

As Doyle struggled to his feet, Beef slammed the Zuggle into the net. Now they were even.

An hour later, the score was still even, two to two. Doyle was about to pass out from exhaustion.

"Don't quit, Doyle! We're with you!" Aimee called from the stands.

Doyle looked up and smiled at her. In that instant, Beef leaned over and broke Doyle's stick in half.

"You're history, Earth boy!" Beef yelled. "Let's see you win this one now!"

The referee dropped the Zuggle. "Hit me! Hit me!" it squealed.

Beef slapped the Zuggle away from Doyle.

"DOYLE!" Aimee screamed. "PLAY FOOTBALL!"

Doyle jumped into action. He dove for the Zuggle, grabbed it—and drop-kicked it into the net!

The cheers shook the walls.

"One of these days, I'm gonna get that Earthbag," Beef muttered. But no one was paying any attention to him.

Doyle went to his locker after the game to put away the two halves of his Zuggle-stick. He noticed Aimee standing in front of her own locker, just down the hall.

"Hi," he said awkwardly.

"Hi, Doyle. You were terrific! Looks as if you're Big Man on Campus again."

"Well, not really," Doyle answered. "I'm still going to have to keep proving myself."

"You sure are!" said his locker, spitting out the pieces of the Zuggle-stick.

"Hey, listen, Aimee," Doyle said. "Maybe the two of us could become friends."

Aimee smiled. "Sure, Doyle. That'd be great. You want to go out on a date?"

"Yeah! That would be fun!" Doyle said.

"Good," Aimee answered. "I've got just the girl for you—Gilda Gossip!" She reached around her locker and pulled out Gilda.

"Wait, Aimee!" Doyle called.

Gilda put her arm around him and smiled with all five mouths.

"How about a kiss, Earth boy?" she asked.

"I'll get you for this, Aimee!" Doyle shouted. But he was already covered with lipstick.



CHAPTER TWO

Those Eyes, Those Lips

Gilda Gossip was so excited that her five mouths were all talking at once. "Oh, my gosh"—"I don't believe it"—"it's a miracle"—"a dream come true"—"for every girl in the whole galaxy!"

She went racing down the corridor and dashed into the girls' gym.

"HE'S COMING!" she screamed. "Mick Maggers is giving a concert here at Galaxy High!"

"Mick's coming *here*?" Boeey Bubblehead began jumping up and down. So did everyone else in the gym. Screaming, honking, and whirring, a flood of alien girls streamed out the door and down the hall.

"Girls! Girls!" the gym teacher cried crossly after them. "What's going on here?" Then it sank

in. "*Mick Maggers?*" she shrieked, and galloped down the hall after them.

Three dazed people were left in the gym—Aimee, Booeey, and Gilda. Slowly Aimee picked herself up off the floor and stared at her two best friends. "Mick Maggers? What's so great about him?" she asked them.

Gilda was astonished. "They don't play his records back on Earth? Jumping galaxies! Mick Maggers is *only* the greatest rock star in the Milky Way!"

Booeey's eyes were wide and dreamy. She reached into her pocket, took out a stack of letters tied with a pink ribbon, and hugged them.

"Mick's coming here," she said softly. "He's finally coming to meet me!"

"What?" asked Gilda. "What do you mean?"

Proudly Booeey pulled one of the letters out of the stack. She handed it to Aimee.

"This is from him!" Aimee said. She began to read aloud, "'I'm hoping to get a concert date at Galaxy High. When I do, look me up. I'd like to meet you! With much affection, Mick Maggers!' Booeey, this is incredible!" she gasped.

"Yeah, I know!" Booeey giggled. "I can hardly believe it."

"Wait!" Gilda said suddenly. "Nobody's going to get to meet *anybody* if we don't get tickets to that concert! Where's the ticket booth?"

"I don't know!" Booeey wailed. "We'd better follow the rest of the horde!"

They were the last in line.

"Oh, fratz," Aimee said. "We'll never make it. . . . Booeey! What are you doing?"

Booeey had climbed onto the shoulders of the nearest kid. She ran across the sea of heads to reach the front of the line. When she got there, she somersaulted down and threw herself at the ticket window.

"One, please," she told the ticket computer.

"I'm sorry," it replied in a metallic voice. "We're sold out!"

Booeey's lips trembled. "What am I going to do?" she whispered. She turned around and stared at the poster of Mick Maggers on the wall. "I'm trying to look you up, Mick, the way you said. But it's going to be harder than I thought."

Aimee and Gilda had caught up to Booeey by now. Aimee put an arm around her shoulders. "Listen, Booeey," she said. "I don't know much about Mick Maggers. But I *do* know what friends can do when they put their heads together. We'll get you into that concert somehow!"

"I don't know how to thank you," Booeey said tearfully. "But I have to ask one thing."

"Anything," Gilda said.

"Could we *hurry up*? I can't wait to see Mick!" Now Booeey was jumping up and down. "I'm so excited I could disintegrate!"

"We do our best thinking at Luigi's, over pizza," Aimee said. "Come on. I'm buying!"

It was the usual madhouse when they got to

Luigi's. Doyle was too busy, shoveling pizzas into the mouth of a roaring tornado alien, to pay much attention to them. They found a table with Wendy Garbo and sat down. Mick's latest song was blaring over the speakers.

The song was playing again half an hour later as they sat dejectedly in the same spot. No one had come up with any ideas.

"Hi, Beefy!" Wendy cooed suddenly as Beef Bonk and his friends walked by—or oozed by in Earl Eccchhh's case. "How's the greatest guy at Galaxy High?"

For a split second Beef looked uncomfortable, but he covered it.

"Okay, okay," he growled. "Youse don't have to play this game with me, Wends. I'm already taking you to the concert, so lay off."

"Wait a minute!" Aimee said. "How are you getting in? The concert's sold out!"

Rotten Roland chuckled shrilly. "When Beef wants something, he gets it! Right, Beef?"

"You got it!" Beef said. And he strutted away.

Before anyone at the table had time to react, a breathless girl's voice came over the loud-speaker.

"Mick's ship! It's landing now! At the space-port!"

Luigi's had never emptied out so fast.

Things weren't too comfortable over at Mick Maggers's promotion office. At least not for

Mick's manager. Beef seemed to be perfectly happy.

He picked the manager up by his collar and swung him around a little.

"I don't think you heard me," he said. "I want to get into the Maggers concert. Okay?"

"Well, uh—we don't—we can't—it's sold out!" stammered the manager.

Beef dropped him back into his chair. "Beef don't take no for an answer!" he bellowed.

"Of course not!" The manager laughed nervously. "Uh, how about working your way in? I could use some extra security guards—and I think you'd be a natural."

"That's more like it!" Beef said.

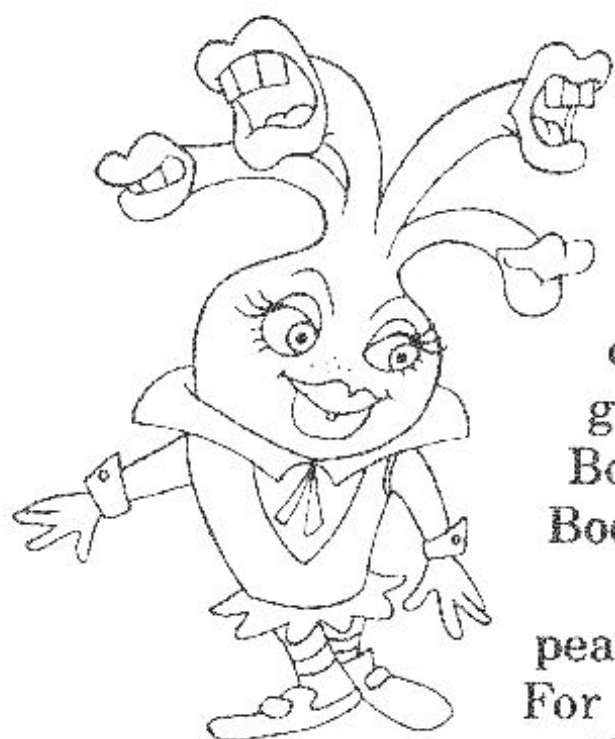
"Great! Great! You can start right now. Mick's due at the spaceport in a few microns. Don't let anyone near his ship. Got that?"

"You got it!" Beef answered. "With Beef on the job, nobody gets near Mick. Because first they gotta get past the Beef!"

Beef shouldered his way through the screaming crowd at the spaceport and planted himself at the entrance.

"This spaceport is *closed*, furbrains!" he shouted.

Aimee, Booeey, and Gilda had made their way to the terminal ahead of the rest of the pack. Mick's ship was so close they could almost reach



out and touch it—but not with Beef blocking the way.

"Come on, Beef!"

Gilda said. "We're here on business. We've got to get a message to Mick! Booeey, give him your note. Booeey—?"

But Booeey had disappeared.

For a Bubblehead, Booeey was thinking pretty fast.

Actually, she wasn't far away at all. She was clinging to the underside of an empty luggage cart on its way up the ramp into the ship. When the cart reached the ship, Booeey dropped off and hid behind the luggage conveyor belt.

"First, this luggage goes to Mick's room at the Galaxy Grand Hotel," she heard someone say. "Room forty-two, the luxury suite." His voice was fading as he walked away. "We've put extra guys on duty at the auditorium, so don't worry about . . ."

Booeey jumped out of her hiding place and ran for the door. "Room forty-two," she repeated to herself. "I've got to tell Aimee! Galaxy Grand Hotel—oof!"

She'd just bumped into someone.

Booeey took a couple of steps backward and

looked up. Smiling down at her was a handsome alien wearing sunglasses and a trench coat. As he moved, he seemed almost to shimmer.

"Are you looking for someone?" he asked her.

"Oh, my gosh!" Booeey stammered, backing away toward the conveyor belt. "I startled you! I mean, you startled me! I mean . . ."

"Are you looking for someone?" the stranger repeated.

"I'm looking for Mick. But you're not Mick."

"No, I'm James," the stranger said.

"Are you *with* Mick?" Booeey asked desperately.

He seemed caught off guard. "Ah—no. I was, but now he's gone."

"Gone?" Booeey sighed. "I'll *never* get to meet him."

Now James was looking interested. "Is that so bad? He's just a regular guy, you know."

"Oh, no," Booeey told him. "You don't understand. He's more than that. He's magic. When he sings, it's as if he were singing just to me . . . holding me when I'm lonely . . . being my friend when I'm sad." She held up the note she'd brought. "I've got to get this note to Mick. To let him know that I'm his friend, too."

James smiled in sympathy. "Listen, I kind of help Mick out every now and then," he said. "Maybe I can get that note to him for you."

Booeey started. "No!" She took a step back.

"I'd really rather give it to him myself." She took another step back, and tripped over the conveyor belt.

Instantly it whisked her out of sight. Her note fluttered to the ground.

"Somebody! Anybody! Help!" she screamed.

Aimee and Gilda had waited till the crowd dispersed, then snuck inside the spaceport. They were still looking for Booeey when the conveyor belt dropped her off with all the other luggage.

Booeey's shoulders were drooping. "I really blew it," she said. "He'll never get that letter now. Pretty dumb, huh?"

Aimee patted her on the back. "Don't worry, Booeey. We'll figure something else out."

Behind them, a sleepy guard sat at his station, watching TV. Aimee turned around as the volume on the TV suddenly became much louder.

"This is Crazy Dave, Hot Knave of the Video Waves, comin' at you Maggers fans," a video jockey's voice announced.

"Booeey, Gilda—listen!" Aimee said. The three girls gathered around the television.

"We've got concert tickets galore! Just be caller number two million, three hundred fifty-six thousand, seven hundred and forty-two to win!" the announcer continued.

"We have to phone Crazy Dave—quick!" Aimee cried. The girls ran through the spaceport, searching for a phone booth.

They ran past a line of booths, but each one had a teen alien crammed into it. At last Gilda pointed excitedly at an empty booth.

"Attack!" she yelled. The girls rushed in and got stuck in the door.

"Gilda, watch your knee!" Booeey said.

"Sorry. Inhale! Think small!" Gilda told her.

"Almost there," Aimee said in an encouraging voice. "One more inch . . . Come on, guys, we can do it!"

Just then, a young alien walked by with a portable video-radio. On the screen was Crazy Dave. The VJ smiled. "Sorry, all you Maggers fans, contest's over," he said. "We have a winner!"

Aimee, Gilda, and Booeey all groaned at once. Then Booeey gave one last twist and freed herself from the doorway of the phone booth.

Aimee and Gilda followed her. "Come on, Booeey," Aimee said. "We'll get you that ticket. What are friends for?"

Booeey turned away. "No, Aimee. I'm never going to meet Mick. It just wasn't meant to be! Listen, I really appreciate your trying to help. But I just want to be alone." Head hanging, she walked slowly away.

"Aimee! Aimee! I've been looking all over for you!" Ms. McBrain ran up and stopped beside Aimee.

"I have wonderful news," she panted. "Each city Mr. Maggers visits, he presents the student

with the highest grades a free ticket to his concert! A little gift from Mick to you!"

The ticket was shimmering in her hand.

"Oh, thank you!" Aimee gasped. "You have no idea how important this is to me!"

She grabbed the ticket and glanced at Gilda.

"Booey! Come back!" they called, racing after their friend.

Booey didn't hear them. She was heading home in tears. She didn't even notice where she was walking—which was right into James. Again.

"Oh! Oh, hello," she said drearily, and kept on walking.

James reached out and touched her shoulder. "We didn't get a chance to finish talking," he said. "I was worried."

Booey sighed. "I know. The conveyor belt. I guess I got carried away."

She turned away. "Listen, I just can't talk right now. I feel terrible."

James pulled her letter to Mick from his coat. "I think I have just the thing to cheer you up," he said.

"BOOEY! BOOEY! MICK MAGGERS! FINALLY, MICK MAGGERS!"

Booey and James turned to see Aimee and Gilda running crazily toward them. "Stop! Stop!" they were screaming.

"Uh-oh," said James as he ran out of sight.

The girls didn't even notice that he'd gone. They pounded up to Booeey and then stopped, trying to get their breath.

"Ticket . . . concert . . . Mick Maggers!" Aimee puffed.

"Aimee got a ticket! For good grades!" Gilda said.

"And I want you to have it," Aimee said.

Booeey grabbed it excitedly—and then her face fell.

"But, Aimee, I can't take this. You *earned* it!"

"Booeey!" Aimee scolded. "How's Mick going to play his best without his greatest fan in the audience? You've got to go! It would make me very, very happy."

Booeey hugged her. Then she started bouncing up and down. "Aimee, you're the best friend I've ever had," she said. "Now *let's go!*"

The crowd outside the Galaxy High auditorium was out of its mind with excitement. Booeey was the happiest of all. "I only wish you guys could come, too," she said.

"That's okay," Aimee said. "You'll tell us all about it afterward!"

"And then *I'll* tell everybody else," Gilda said.

Suddenly there was a scream. "He's coming! He's coming!" shrieked a purple creature next to Aimee.

He wasn't. It was just someone dressed like

Mick Maggers. But when Booeey turned to see, she dropped her ticket. People were jammed so tightly around her that she couldn't pick it up.

"My ticket! My ticket!" she cried.

"Someone dropped a ticket?" the purple alien yelled. "Someone dropped a ticket! A ticket!"

All around Booeey, people scrambled madly to find the ticket. The crowd pushed her farther and farther away from the spot where she'd lost it.

She found herself on the very edge of the wall of people waiting outside the auditorium doors. Aimee and Gilda were right next to her.

"We'll never find it now," Booeey said. "Let's just get out of here."

She turned to leave—and banged into none other than James.

"Hey! Aren't you walking in the wrong direction?" he asked, smiling.

Booeey just looked away.

"I have something that might cheer you up," James said.

"Nothing can cheer me up now."

"Not even a ticket to the concert?"

Booeey stopped dead in her tracks.

"I have one for you," James said. "But on one condition. You've got to go to the concert with me."

"You've got it!" Booeey said.

"And your friends, too."

"You've got it!" Aimee and Gilda said in unison.

"Great!" Beef snarled, standing guard at the door. "So Booeys got a ticket. She stays. The rest of you? Out! No gate-crashers at *my* door!"

"These aren't gate-crashers!" James said. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a handful of tickets. "They're my friends. And they all have tickets!" They swept through the door.

"Who is this dweebie?" Beef asked.

"I don't know!" Booeys said over her shoulder. "But he's the greatest!"

"Hey!" shouted Beef. "I don't have a ticket!"

The concert was about to start, and Aimee and her friends had the best seats in the house.

Booeys leaned toward James. "I don't know how to thank you, James!" she said happily.

James smiled. "You really like Mick, don't you?"

"He's the ultimate! But you're pretty terrific, too."

She leaned over to kiss him on the cheek—and a spotlight glared right into her eyes.

"Huh?" Booeys said, blinking.

"What's that for?" Aimee asked.

"Me," James said simply. "Welcome to my world."

The air seemed to be shimmering all around him. For a second James disappeared in a burst of

light. When the light faded, Mick Maggers was standing in front of them.

The audience went wild.

Mick bowed, and then winked at Booeey. "Pretty good disguise, huh?" he asked.

Booeey was still blinking. "But, James, you're not Mick. You're James! Not Mick . . . But you *are* Mick! *Mick Maggers!*"

The music was starting. Mick pulled Booeey to her feet. "Let's go," he said. He took her hand and led her onstage, beckoning for Aimee and Gilda to follow.

The audience was already dancing in the aisles when Mick reached the stage. Just before he picked up the microphone, he turned to Booeey. "Do you still think I'm the greatest?" he asked softly.

Booeey beamed. "I like you better than ever!"

Mick turned back to his screaming fans. "I'd like to dedicate this one to someone very special," he said. "One—two—three—four! Booeey, Booeey, she wrote me a letter . . ."



CHAPTER THREE

The Beef Who Would Be King

For Doyle Cleverlobe, it was a day like any other at Galaxy High.

Beef Bonk was still out to get him. First, Beef had slipped an antigravity pill into Doyle's breakfast at the boy's dormitory. It took forever for somebody to notice Doyle and pull him down from the ceiling.

Doyle got back at Beef by putting onions into Beef's desk. They made him cry out loud during a poetry lesson.

Beef decided to try to pulverize Doyle on the

athletic field. The cheerleaders, including Aimee, didn't appreciate having their practice interrupted.

That's where Doyle was when the spacecraft landed.

A blinding, hot-pink spotlight fixed Doyle and Beef in its gaze. A gangplank lowered. The spacecraft door slid open, and out waddled three fat little aliens eating corn dogs.

"Greetings from the planet Kholesterol!" piped the leader, who was wearing a little blue beanie. He took a big bite of his corn dog and continued with his mouth full. "We've been studying your school. We want one of you students for our new leader—the High Kholesterol!"

"Who could they mean?" Aimee whispered to Doyle.

The Creep buzzed lovingly around her head. "Someone honest, loyal, pretty, and talented. Like you, Aimee," he crooned.

"ARE YOU NUTS?" screamed the head Kholesterol. He held out his hand. One of the others opened a picnic basket and took out a can of peanuts. The head Kholesterol grabbed them and gobbled them down. When the last one was gone, he pointed—at Beef.

"We want *him*!" he said.

Aimee looked as if someone had slapped her. "Beef? Your leader?" she asked.

A second Kholesterol stepped forward. "Yep. Our new Big Cheese!"

The third Kholesterol opened the picnic basket and pulled out a hunk of cheese. His friend swallowed it in a single chomp.

"You *can't* make Beef your leader!" Aimee said indignantly. "Why, even Doyle would be better!"

"I would?" Doyle asked, surprised. "Oh, yeah, I guess I would!"

"Butt out, Doyle!" spat Beef. But Aimee didn't pay any attention to him.

"Beef would give Galaxy High a bad name. Doyle should be your king!" she repeated.

Now the Kholesterols were whispering to each other and staring at Doyle.

"Well, the proof is in the pudding," said the head Kholesterol. On cue, three cans of pudding came out of the basket, and the Kholesterols slurped them down. "We suggest a challenge!" continued the head Kholesterol.

Aimee nudged Doyle. "What're you good at?" she muttered under her breath.

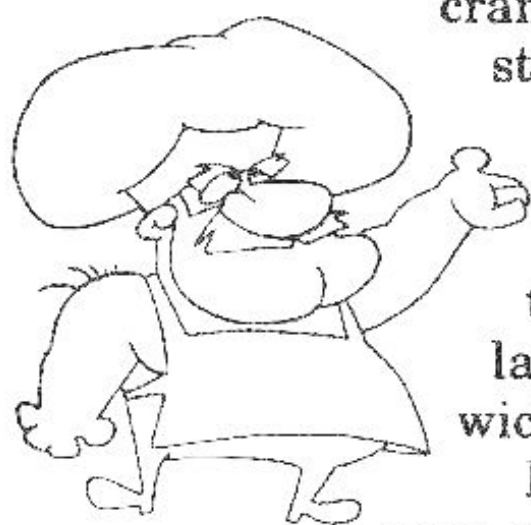
"I dunno. Racing?" Doyle suggested.

Aimee marched up to the head Kholesterol. "Doyle challenges Beef to a space rally!" she shouted.

"I—I do?" Doyle said. "But—"

Beef grabbed him by the collar. "You're on, Earth boy," he growled. "And may the best *Beef* win!"

"Pizza! Get your hot mozzaroni pizza here!" Luigi called. The Galaxy High stadium was crammed with kids. Luigi was strolling through the stands selling his famous slices.



"Yummers! Pizza!" said the head Kholes-terol. He wolfed down the last of his meatball sandwich.

Down on the field the two cars were parked. "Where's the starting line?" Coach Frogface called.

"I'm coming! I'm coming!" answered a far-off voice. A long, white creature slid into view and lay down in front of the two cars. "Whenever you're ready," it said sadly.

Doyle was at the wheel of Aimee's Xenon X-5000 Turbo-Space Coupe de Ville. He was biting his knuckles nervously while Aimee and Milo gave the car a final check.

Beef didn't look nervous at all. He was sitting behind the wheel of his Bonkmobile while *his* pit crew—Earl Eccchhh and Rotten Roland—did some last-minute work. At last Earl cleaned the windshield by smearing himself across it, and Roland handed Beef some papers.

"What're these?" Beef asked.

Roland grinned broadly. "Let's just call them road maps to success."

Beef grinned, too. "Oh, I get it. Cheat sheets!"

"OKAY, BOYS. START YOUR ENGINES!" Coach Frogface's voice blared over the loud-speaker.

Thrusters crackled. Turbines whined. The pit crews ran for cover. Before the coach could give the start signal, Beef had gunned his car across the starting line and disappeared from sight.

When Doyle caught up with him, Beef wasn't upset at all. Calmly he started smashing his car into the side of Doyle's.

"Stop that!" Doyle yelled. "You're pushing me into a time warp!"

Beef rammed Doyle's car again—and their fenders locked. Both cars flew off the route and fell into a shimmering cloud floating in the air nearby.

In an instant the cars were being driven by two babies. "You stinky-winky!" Baby Beef wailed, bouncing his pacifier off Doyle's head.

Another instant, and two old men were at the wheels. Beef grabbed his cane and rapped it against Doyle's hood. "Get away, you old coot!" he quavered.

When they pulled out of the time warp, Beef grabbed a crowbar from his car. He used it to pry the locked fenders apart. Then he shoved Doyle's car onto a snow-covered comet.

Doyle revved the thrusters, but his car was stuck. "Just my luck." He sighed. "No snow

thrusters." He dragged a snow shovel from the trunk.

"Yup, it sure is glamorous being a famous exchange student from Earth," he muttered as he got to work.

Meanwhile, Beef was in no hurry. "I've left that Earth geek so far behind he'll *never* catch up!" he chortled to himself. Suddenly a nearby sign caught his eye: Big Dipper Burgers. He pulled up to the floating hamburger stand. "Gimme a Nebulaburger," he said. "No onions!"

He leaned back in the seat and took a big bite. Then he spat it out. "WHAT?" he shouted.

Doyle had just passed his car! Beef tossed the burger out of the car and stepped on the gas pedal. "This car stinks!" he bellowed.

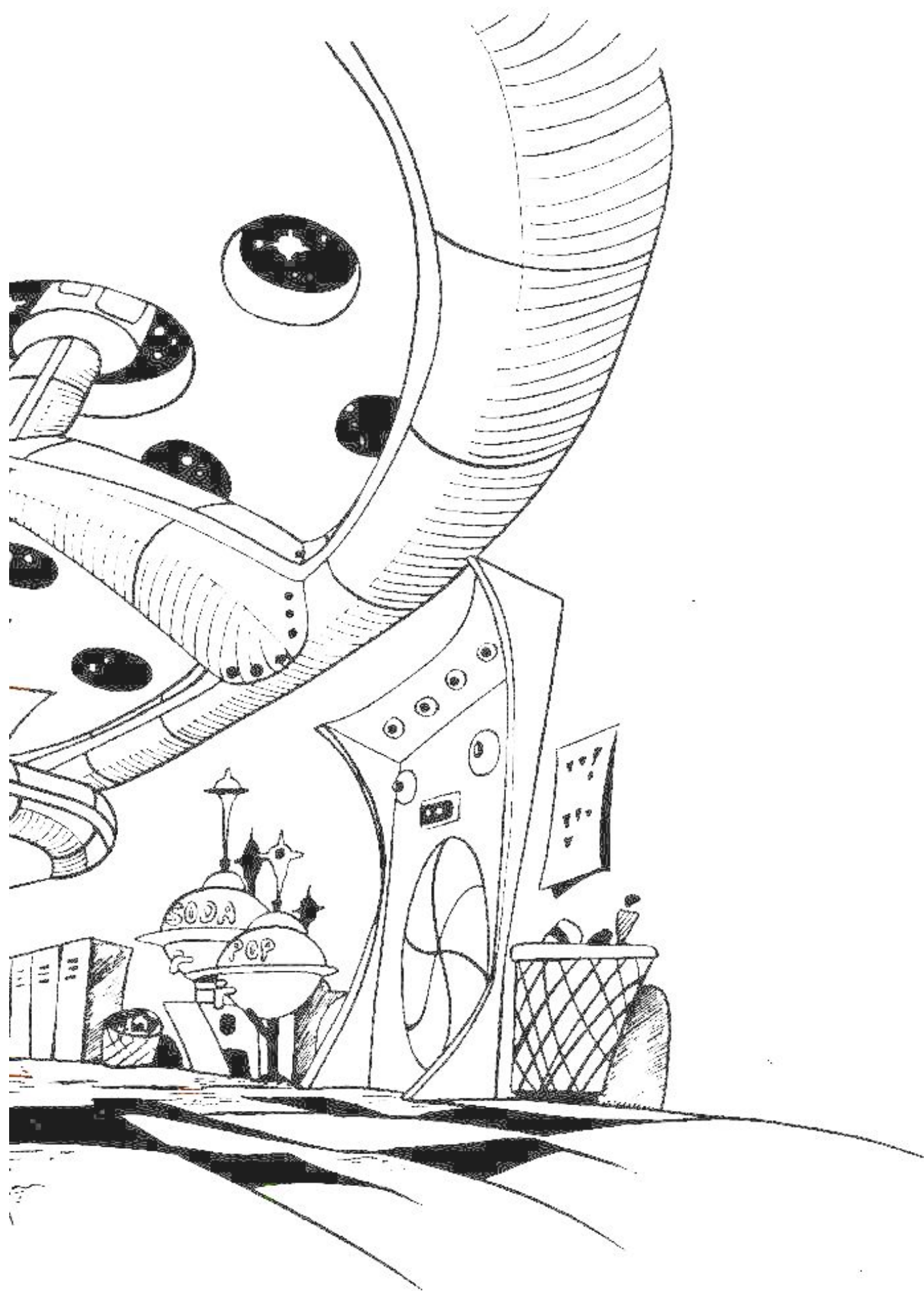
He got to the stadium just in time to see Doyle cross the finish line.

The stadium was going wild. Milo was pumping Doyle's hand with all six of his, and Aimee was hugging him. "You did it! And without cheating!" she shouted. "You're King Doyle the First!"

"Baloney!" shouted the head Kholesterol, marching past Doyle with the crown. "According to Kholesterol law, the biggest *cheater* in the galaxy gets crowned!"

As the other Kholesterols cheered wildly, he placed the crown on Beef's head and led him away.





An hour later, Doyle and Milo were walking toward Professor Icenstein's science lab, covered from head to foot in thick winter clothes.

"What do you want to see the professor about, anyway?" asked Milo.

"I just want to find out what kind of royal life I'm missing out on," Doyle answered.

The science lab was freezing, as usual. Ice covered the walls, and icicles hung from the ceiling.

"Doyle! Milo! So good to see you!" the professor said. "Pull up a block of ice and tell me what's on your minds."

"Wh-what do you know about the planet Kholesterol?" Doyle asked. His teeth were chattering already.

"Kholesterol," the professor repeated, punching a computer screen. "Ah, here it is. Every year the Kholesterols crown someone High Kholesterol. Someone mean, untrustworthy—of no value to the galaxy. A real gazort!"

"Why would they want someone like that?" Doyle asked.

"So they can gain dietetic sustenance by digesting his metabolic calories!"

"Come again?"

"They eat the guy!" Professor Icenstein said brightly.

On the planet Kholesterol, Beef was in hog heaven. He leaned back, eyes closed, and luxuriated in a huge bathtub.

What Beef didn't realize was that the tub was filled with sauce. . . . And that the Kholesterols were pouring it over him with a ladle. He was being basted!

He grinned lazily. "What a life," he said. "This job is a piece of cake."

Behind him was a sign with a recipe on it. The recipe was for Beef Tenderloin.

"Poor Beef!" Aimee said after Doyle had told her the news. "We've got to do something!"

Doyle snickered. "Let's send barbecue sauce."

"Doyle! It could have been you! Come on. You *have* to save him. I'll lend you my car again."

"Help Beef Bonk? Do you think I'm crazy?" Doyle asked.

Aimee just looked at him.

"Oh, all right, I'll rescue him," Doyle muttered. "I guess I'm not crazy. I'm *bonkers*."

Trumpets blared as Beef walked up the stairs toward the great hall.

Suddenly he stopped and scowled at the nearest trumpeter. "Muffle it, quarkface!" he snarled. He grabbed the trumpet, crushed it like a soda can, and pushed the trumpeter down the stairs.

The Kholesterols cheered wildly.

Beef was escorted to the head table. It was covered with magnificent platters of food. He

dipped a dirty finger into one of the platters and licked it.

"This food stinks!" he said. With a sweep of his arm, he knocked the table to the ground.

The Kholesterols cheered wildly.

Two jesters danced up to entertain him. With a well-aimed kick, Beef sent them flying down the stairs.

The Kholesterols cheered wildly.

"He's so mean!" one of them gloated. "He really tickles my taste buds. Finally, a High Kholesterol we can sink our teeth into!"

Suddenly there was the sound of a struggle in the outer hall. "I've got to see him!" shouted Doyle. "It's life or death!"

He came into the room, trying to shake off two Kholesterols who'd pinned his arms back. "Beef!" he whispered when he reached the head table. "You've got to leave. You're in danger here!"

Beef's eyes narrowed. "What's the matter, Earth boy? Jealous?" he jeered.

"Beef, you've gotta believe me. They don't want Beef, the king. They want *Beef à la king!*"

"Oh, you're sick," Beef said.

One of the guards holding Doyle stepped forward. "Shall we throw him in Barbecue Canyon?" he asked.

"Sounds hot." Beef laughed. "Sure."

He watched with a grin as the two guards dragged Doyle, kicking and screaming, out of the

room. Then he turned to the head Kholesterol. "What's holding up supper?" he asked. "I'm starving."

"As you wish!" said the head Kholesterol. "Let the Super Supper begin!"

The crowd began to chant.

"WE WANT BEEF! WE WANT BEEF! WE WANT BEEF!"

"O High Kholesterol, it is time to take your place on the royal rotisserie," the head Kholesterol said solemnly.

Beef followed his gaze—and saw flames licking at a huge barbecue spit!

His eyes went wide. He gulped. Then he yelled.

"DOYLE! KHOLESTEROL STINKS! LEMME GO! YOU GUYS STINK!"

Doyle heard Beef's screams, and the sound gave him a jolt of energy. He burst free from his captors and bolted back into the great hall. He slammed into the guards strapping Beef down and grabbed him. "Let's go!" he shouted. They took off, running madly through the streets.

Hundreds of Kholesterols followed, holding their knives and forks like spears.

"Oooh, this turkey's feisty!" said one. "He'll be the best yet. Nothing like a good hunt to work up the appetite!"

Doyle and Beef passed trees shaped like chicken drumsticks and mountains covered with cherry icing. They forded a gravy river. At last

they reached a place where they could run no farther.

It was a huge cliff. A cliff with red-hot coals waiting at the bottom.

"Something tells me this is Barbecue Canyon," Doyle said.

"Yeah," Beef said. "'Cause it's the *pits*! Think of something, zimp. This is all your fault!"

"My fault!" Doyle yelled. "Why don't *you* ever think of something!"

"Okay," said Beef smugly. "I will. You just gave me an idea. Thanks, Zuggleface!"

He stuck out his tongue. Farther . . . farther . . . farther it went. It wrapped around a drumstick tree on the other side of the canyon. Beef began to pull himself to safety.

Doyle was left alone. Within seconds, two Kholesterols rushed up and grabbed him. The head Kholesterol was close behind—and behind him was a hungry mob.

"You ruined Super Supper," the head Kholesterol said angrily. "You must pay!"

"Uh, how much?" Doyle asked. "I'm kind of short on cash."

The head Kholesterol just nodded at his two henchmen. They picked Doyle up by the hands and feet and started swinging him back and forth over the canyon.

"One, two, three . . ." they chanted.

Beef had reached the chicken-drumstick tree on the other side. But he'd gained so much

speed that he couldn't stop. He whipped up around the tree and sailed back across the canyon, bashing into the Kholesterols and knocking them to the ground.

"You came back for Doyle!" the head Kholesterol gasped. "Oh, fudge!" He burst into tears. "Why'd you have to go and do something nice? Now you can't be our High Kholesterol!"

"Say what?" Beef said.

"Only the galaxy's most despicable bum gets to be the top banana," the head Kholesterol explained. "Now we'll have to find another turkey for our Super Supper!"

Boo-hooing like babies, he and the other Kholesterols staggered away, leaving Doyle and Beef alone.

"Beef, I can't believe it!" Doyle exclaimed. "You're not the selfish dimbo I thought you were. You saved me!"

Beef shrugged. "Everybody makes mistakes," he said, grinning.



CHAPTER FOUR

Dollars and Sense

"Hurry! Get that sign up!" Wendy Garbo ordered. "He'll be here any minute!"

There was frenzy in the air at Luigi's Lunar Pizza Parlor. Milo de Venus was struggling to put up a huge sign that read, Welcome Back, Reggie! Gilda Gossip was going through tube after tube of lipstick. And Booeey Bubblehead was frantically polishing her head to make it shine.

"Welcome back, Reggie!" Luigi said. "Beautiful! Think he'll like it?"

"He'll love it!" said Aimee, who'd just walked in. "Who is he?"

Luigi stared at her in amazement. "You're kidding, no? Why, Reginald Unicycle, he's . . ."

"He's the catch of the universe!" finished Gilda.

"He's the comet's tail!" Booeey chimed in.

"He's filthy rich!" Wendy said. There was a look of determination in her eye. "And he's going to be *mine*."

"And he's **HERE!**" Gilda squealed as they heard a roaring sound outside.

A spectacular limousine pulled up to the pizza parlor. A tuxedoed chauffeur climbed stiffly out and marched the long distance to the passenger door. He opened the door, and out rolled the catch of the universe.

Reginald Unicycle was human from the waist up. He had wavy blond hair and a movie-star face. But his lower half was a tire. And he wheeled straight up to Aimee the minute he laid eyes on her.

"Careful!" Aimee cautioned him. "Luigi just waxed the floor. You'll get tire tracks all over!"

"Come again?" Reggie asked.

"They're expecting a Reggie somebody . . . some big wheel," Aimee told him. Then she looked at his tire. "But you're no small wheel yourself, are you?" She giggled.

"How delightfully droll!" Reggie exclaimed. "I can't stand it! Are you—"

But Aimee had already walked out the door.

"Reggie, so good to see you!" Luigi gushed,

pressing Reggie's hand. "Anything you want, you got!"

"I want *her*!" Reggie replied. "That vision of perfection, that bouquet of beauty! She's almost as stunning as I am. *Who* is she?"

"She's a total geekezoid!" Wendy snapped, walking up to Reggie. "From Earth. And you know what they say about Earth."

Beef, who was sitting nearby, didn't even look up from his pizza. "Earth stinks!" he grunted.



Wendy put one hand on her hip. "So let's you and me make tracks together!" she told Reggie.

He drew back. "You *must* be joking. My heart is aflame. My eyes are afire. The Earth girl and I shall light up the sky!"

Wendy's face was a bright, angry green. "That—that—" she sputtered.

Reggie didn't notice. With a screech of his tire he shot out the door.

"Come back, you goddess of love! Come back to Reggie! And let me worship you!" he shouted.

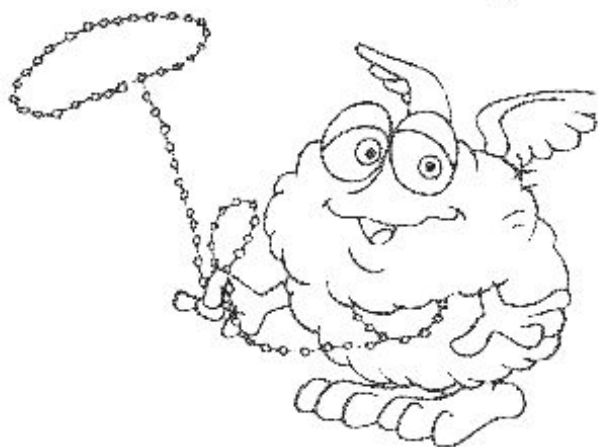
Aimee went back to the Galaxy High library. She was happily working at her computer when the Creep flew in.

The Creep cleared his throat as he hovered over her. Aimee looked up.

"Oh, Aimee, it's terrible, actually," he blurted. "I hear Reggie wants to ask you out tonight."

"Reggie? Be serious," Aimee said absently.

"I *am*. Seriously in love with you. Go out with *me* tonight, Aimee!" the Creep begged.



Aimee punched in a few more numbers. "I'm not going anywhere tonight, Creep. I promised

Doyle and Booley I'd help them study."

"But, Aimee—" the Creep began. Then, with a last sad look at her, he flew out of the library.

As he flew out, Reggie rolled in. With a confident smile he tapped Aimee on the shoulder.

"Look, Creep, I said—" Aimee began sternly.

"Say you'll go out with me!" Reggie broke in. Aimee looked up, startled. "You *must* go out with me," he continued. "I'm mad about you, and without you I'll go maaaaaaaad."

"Sorry!" Aimee said politely. "I have to study for intergalactic relations class."

Reggie threw a dramatic hand over his eyes. "What?" he moaned. "The girl who turns me on turns me *down*? I'll do anything for you!"

"Quiet!" the librarian said.

"You hardly know me!" Aimee whispered. This Reggie Unicycle was beginning to get on her nerves.

"I know what my eyes and my heart tell me," Reggie whispered back. "You're *beautiful!*"

"Wow!" Aimee said, impressed in spite of herself.

"Tonight, then?" Reggie urged.

Aimee paused for a second. If she went out with Reggie, she'd have to break her study date with Doyle and Booeey.

But maybe it will be good for Doyle to see that a cool guy like Reggie is interested in me, she thought.

"Well, all right," she said at last. "But just this once."

Reggie clasped his hands to his chest. "Oh, rapturous heart, be still!" he said in a throbbing voice. "I can't STAND it! She said yes! My chauffeur will pick you up at seven."

Aimee watched as he wheeled off. Then she chuckled and got back to work.

It was six-thirty that evening, and Doyle and Booeey were on their way to Aimee's room.

"I'm so glad Aimee's going to help us with our intergalactic relations homework," Booeey said. "Without her help I'll never pass."

They reached Aimee's room, and Doyle knocked on the door.

"Come in!" Aimee called. She was sitting in front of a mirror, putting on makeup.

Her heart sank when Doyle and Booeey walked in. She'd forgotten to tell them she couldn't help them study!

Doyle looked puzzled. "Why are you putting all that goop on?" he asked.

"Just fixing my face," Aimee said. "Listen, you guys—"

"Oh, no!" Booeey cried. "How long has it been broken?"

Doyle plopped down on a chair and opened his notebook impatiently. "Come on, let's study!" he said. "We haven't got all night."

"Doyle . . . Booeey . . . that's what I'm trying to say. I can't study tonight. I have a date with Reggie Unicycle! I'm sorry that I forgot to tell you before now."

"With Reggie?" Doyle asked. "But you said you'd help us study!"

"I promise I'll help you tomorrow," Aimee said.

"Yeah, sure!" Doyle snapped. "Well, have a *rich* time with Mr. Big Wheel." He stamped away.

"Gee, Aimee, you've never let us down like this before," Booeey said sadly.

"Booeey, I—I'm sorry." Aimee sighed. Her plan to make Doyle jealous had backfired, and now Booeey was upset with her, too!

"Have a good time, Aimee." Booeey followed Doyle out of the room without looking back.

Aimee was waiting outside the dorm when Gilda raced up to her.

"So what are you going to wear on your big date with Reggie?" she asked excitedly.

Aimee looked down at herself. "This," she said.

Gilda looked stunned. "Get serious, Aimee! This is a big wheel you're going out with. You have to dress better! What will I tell our friends?"

Reggie's limousine honked as it pulled up to them. Aimee gave Gilda a little nudge.

"Here he comes! Go on!" she hissed.

"But, Aimee, I need all the gossip—"

Aimee broke in fiercely. "Gilda, I don't want you blabbing one single word!"

"Well!" Gilda said coldly, and stalked away.

Reggie rolled out of the limousine. When he caught sight of Aimee, he let out a piercing yell.

"Reggie, what's the matter?" she asked, alarmed.

"Aimee, look at you! I can't stand it! Your beauty—it's blinding. It's like looking at a thousand suns rising at once!"

"I don't know what to say, Reggie." Aimee was blushing.

"Say nothing. Speak to me with your eyes." He helped her into the limousine.

"I have a zorktabulous evening planned," he went on as they settled back in the soft leather seats. "We'll have salad on Saturn, clams on the half-moon—and for the *pièce de résistance*,

you'll have the pleasure of my company!" And they roared off into hyperspace.

Most of the lights were out in the girls' dorm as the limousine glided up to the front door. Aimee turned to Reggie.

"Thank you," she said warmly. "I had a wonderful time tonight." It was true. She'd enjoyed the movie, *Invaders from Earth*, and then they'd gone to a fun nightclub. Then they'd parked at Lunar Lovers' Lane, where Reggie had held her hand while they listened to music on his car's built-in stereo.

"The first of many, my cosmic cupcake!" answered Reggie. "I simply *must* see you again. Spend a weekend with me and my folks on the Platinum Planet? I'll pick you up tomorrow."

Aimee hesitated. She'd had fun with Reggie, but that didn't mean she wanted to spend *all* her time with him. *Besides*, she thought, *seeing Reggie is messing up my friendships!*

"I—I'll need time to think about it," Aimee said at last. "I'll let you know tomorrow."

The next day, a Candygram from Reggie arrived while Aimee was getting ready for school. When she opened the box, the little chocolate-covered candies jumped out of their wrappers and tap-danced as they sang to her.

Aimee smiled and offered some candy to Booeey, Gilda, and Wendy, who came by to pick

her up for school. Just then, another delivery came. This time, it was a carpet of flowers that stretched from the girls' dorm all the way to Galaxy High!

Reggie's next gift arrived while Aimee was sitting in Ms. McBrain's class. An orchestra began playing outside the classroom—so loudly that it drowned out Ms. McBrain's lecture.

Ms. McBrain looked frustrated. "Now, Aimee," she said. "This romance of yours is disrupting the whole school!"

"I can't do anything about it," Aimee said helplessly. "Reggie keeps sending me gifts."

"Then send them back!" Ms. McBrain said crisply. "I never thought I'd have a problem with you, Aimee. But this is getting out of hand."

Reggie's attention *was* getting out of hand, Aimee decided. Reggie didn't seem to believe that Aimee could like him just for being himself—not because he showered her with presents.

The bell rang and the class started to leave, but Aimee stayed behind at her desk, deep in thought. At last she made up her mind. She would tell Reggie that she didn't want to see him that weekend.

"You look marveloid!" Reggie exclaimed when he came for her the next night. "Shall we be off? Mummy and Daddy are waiting."

"Reggie, I don't think I should go," Aimee said firmly.

"Say it isn't true," Reggie begged. "Say it isn't so! Say *anything* but no!"

"Aimee!" someone called from behind them. They turned to see Doyle and Milo approaching.

"You can't go with him!" Doyle said firmly. "Can't you see this guy is a phony?"

Aimee opened her mouth to tell Doyle she wasn't going, but Reggie cut her off. "Phony? I can't stand it! You're too droll, whoever you are!"

"He's got girls in every corner of the galaxy!" Milo said.

Reggie turned to Aimee. "Don't listen to them, my Plutonium Pumpkin," he told her. "*They* don't appreciate your radiant beauty and effervescent personality."

"Aimee, he's not serious!" Doyle exploded. "Radiant *beauty*? Effervescent *personality*?"

Aimee forgot all about her decision. "Just because *you've* never noticed, Doyle Clever-lobe . . ." she said angrily.

Reggie held his arm out—and Aimee took it. She marched to the limousine and stepped inside.

"To the Platinum Planet," she told the chauffeur loudly. "And hyperspace it!"

Reggie's limousine stopped in front of the most fantastic building Aimee had ever seen.

"Reggie, this is unbelievable!" she gasped. "I never dreamed anyone lived in a house like this!"

"How droll!" Reggie laughed. "What a sense of humor! This is only the garage!"

Aimee's jaw dropped, but she made a quick recovery. "Oh, I knew that all the time," she said.

They stepped onto a long spiral escalator and rode to the top. There, the first thing that Aimee saw was a huge marble pool. "Wow! An indoor swimming pool!" she said.

Reggie laughed again. "You're so droll I can't stand it! That's the bathtub! That tub of wa-wa over *there* is the indoor pool!"

A pool? Aimee thought. It looks more like an ocean! How many pools have surf?

Reggie threw open a door—and there was a magnificent balcony. Outside, a diamond moon sparkled over a laser fountain.

"Can you stand it?" Reggie asked. "I bought it for you and had it sent Galactic Express."

"I . . . I don't know what to say," Aimee whispered.

"Say you'll tour the galaxy with me!" Reggie said cheerfully.

"Oh, Reggie! I've always wanted to tour the galaxy! But what about school? What about my friends?"

Reggie waved a dismissing hand. "That doesn't matter! But you don't have to answer now," he said. "You can answer tonight, at the party I'm throwing for you in my mansion."

"What party?" Aimee asked, looking down worriedly at her clothes.

"Oh, nothing special. Just a little get-together for you, me—and several hundred close friends."

Aimee had never seen such a grand party. At one end of the ballroom, a full orchestra was playing. The hors d'oeuvres trays floated in the air from guest to guest. There were famous people in every corner of the room.

But Reggie paid attention only to Aimee. He'd even had a solid gold statue of her made!

The party would have been perfect—except for the fact that Reggie's several hundred close friends didn't seem all that welcoming.

"So, do you own a galaxy?" John D. Rockefeller asked her after Aimee had introduced herself. Reggie was off getting her some punch.

"Oh, no," Aimee smiled. "I'm still in high school."

"I see. Then your family's rich?"

"Well, no," Aimee answered brightly. "But my mother's chocolate pudding is."

John D. gave her a frozen little smile. Then he walked away. Aimee was beginning to feel uncomfortable.

The minute he was gone, two overdressed girls about Aimee's age came toward her.

"Aimee, darling," the first one said in syrupy tones. "I've been wanting to ask you all evening—what are you going to do when Reginald is through with you?"

"Through with me?" Aimee asked, shocked.

"Of course! It always happens, you know."

"And it's not as if you'll have your money to fall back on, the way we did when he dumped us," added the second.

"Well, I'd have other things to fall back on!" Aimee said hotly. "Like my friends." As the two girls walked away, she added to herself, "Things I've almost lost . . ."

Aimee turned and walked out on the balcony. She wanted to be alone.

"I should have known better," she told herself. "I let myself be overwhelmed. I should have listened to the ones who really care about me—"

At that moment, Reggie zoomed up to her. "Come on, darling. Have you decided yet? Are you ready to go on our little tour?" he asked.

"Sorry, Reggie. I'm not going with you," Aimee answered. "I've got to get back to school."

Reggie looked as if he were about to burst his tire. "What? You're not coming? But I can't *stand* it if you don't come!" he shouted.

"You'll find someone else. You always have," Aimee pointed out.

"I won't, I won't, I won't!" Reggie cried. He broke out into a fit of sobs. "Never! Never! Never—who is *that*?"

He was staring back into the ballroom as if someone had hit him over the head.

"Oh, my word," he breathed. "Who is that

radiant creature over there? I can't *stand* it!" And he wheeled into the ballroom without a backward glance.

Aimee grinned and went outside to call a cab. Now that she knew who her *real* friends were, she couldn't wait to get back to them.



CHAPTER FIVE

Beach-Blanket Blow Up

The winter comet was orbiting Galaxy High, and the school was freezing.

"Darn this locker!" Doyle said to Wendy Garbo. "First it wouldn't take my clothes. Now it's trying to keep all my winter stuff for itself. Give me back that scarf, you!" he yelled as his locker reached out and tweaked the scarf away from him.

"I can't wait for spring break," Wendy said. "Won't it be gweetchy to go to Fort Lauderdale for the summer nova?"

"Yeah!" Doyle's face lit up. "When do we leave?"

"As soon as you pick me up tomorrow," Wendy purred.

"But—but I don't have a car!"

Wendy looked at him from under her purple lashes. "Aimee does," she said.

Doyle's face fell. "Forget it. Aimee hates beaches. She'd never want to go."

"Who said anything about inviting Aimee?" Wendy asked sharply. "It's a date . . . just you and me."

"But how are we supposed to get her car?"

Wendy smiled. "Let's see how *Cleverlobe* you can be!"

An hour later Doyle and Aimee were strolling through the school's walk-room—the only warm place in the building. Around them was a beautiful beach and a turquoise sky. Doyle had programmed the room that way.

He was doing everything he could to soften Aimee up.

"I know how you feel about beaches," he told her, "but spring break is coming up. It sure would be fun to go to Fort Lauderdale, don't you think?"

Aimee's eyes were shining. "Oh, Doyle, I'd love to go!"

"You would? That's terrific! But . . . we can't."

"Why not?" Aimee asked.

"I'm only thinking of you. You're allergic to sand! You'll sneeze so hard you'll sandblast yourself!" He sighed. "No, we'll stay here."

"You're right. I really do hate beaches," Aimee said. "But just because I can't go doesn't

mean you shouldn't. I'll stay here. You take my car—and have a great time."

Doyle threw her a look of relief. "You're terrific, Aimee!" he said. "It'll be hard, but I'll *try* to have fun without you."

As Wendy and Aimee stepped out of their dorm the next morning, the icy wind almost blew them over. Wendy gripped her suitcase tightly. Aimee hugged a book to her chest.

"Where are you going for spring break, Wendy?" Aimee asked when she'd caught her breath.

"Fort Lauderdale," answered Wendy smugly.

"But why are you putting your suitcase in *my* car?"

Wendy was beaming. "Oh, didn't Doyle mention that he's taking me to Fort Lauderdale?"

"What?" Aimee shrieked. "Why, that—that—"

"Uh, ladies—" Doyle said feebly from behind them.

Aimee whipped around. "You cosmic clod!" she hissed.

Doyle winced. *Why is she acting like this?* he wondered. *She doesn't even like the beach!*

"Don't be upset, Aimee," he told her. "I can't go, anyway." He held up his report card. A big red F glared out from it. "Professor Icenstein is making me do extra credit during break."

"How . . . ? How . . . ?" Wendy sputtered.

"Simple," Doyle said, sighing. "I didn't study enough."

"No!" Wendy said. "How am I supposed to get to Fort Lauderdale now? I'm desperate!"

There was a deep, bellowing honk from overhead. It sounded almost like a ship's horn. Doyle and Aimee looked up.

"Ahoy, spacemates!" Reggie Unicycle called. "Daddykins gave me the spaceyacht for the week. All aboard for Fort Lauderdale!"

Without a moment's hesitation Wendy grabbed her suitcase and ran up the ladder onto the yacht. Booeey Bubblehead and Gilda Gossip waved as she came on board.

"I can't stand it if you don't come, too, Aimee!" Reggie shouted.

"Sorry!" Doyle answered. He threw a protective arm around Aimee's shoulders. "We're sticking together. Studying!"

Aimee pulled away from him. "Speak for yourself, Doyle Cleverlobe!" she said, and followed Wendy up the ladder. Bleakly, Doyle watched the huge spaceyacht float off into the sky.

The yacht sped toward Fort Lauderdale. When it reached the planetoid, Aimee saw that there was a bright nova overhead, and a brilliant red sea to swim in. She thought the planetoid would be fun, if only her allergy didn't act up.

The kids hit the beach quickly. Booeey and

Gilda found dates right away, but not Aimee. On Fort Lauderdale, the girls were supposed to chase the boys. The problem was that Aimee wasn't interested in any of the boys she'd seen.

So far she'd met a buck-toothed, bowlegged beach bum and a guy whose legs started just under his chin. Neither one of them was exactly her idea of a dream date.

She slammed her book shut and sprang to her feet. "I think I'll go back to the hotel," she muttered.

Just then Gilda and Booeey walked by. "What's the matter?" Gilda asked, running over to Aimee. "Why do you look so sad? Did someone break your heart? If he did, I'll break his neck—if he has a neck!"

"No, no," Aimee said. "I'm just having a lousy time here. It's exactly like going to the beach on Earth. Except that there I wasn't right for any of the boys. Here, none of them are right for me!"

"Then who's your dream boy?" Booeey asked.

"Oh, someone with two arms and two legs," Aimee said dreamily. "Someone fun. Someone with one head. Someone human."

"Gee, that doesn't sound like any guy I know," Gilda said. "Except maybe Doyle. . . ."

"Doyle!" gasped Aimee. "That no-good double-crossing zork? After what he pulled with Wendy?"

"Maybe he did that to make you jealous,"

Gilda said. "Aren't Earth boys like that? Maybe he's really crazy about you!"

There was a startled look in Aimee's eyes. She'd never thought of that.

Back at school, Doyle was shivering over his computer terminal.

"It's tough predicting when a nova will become a supernova," he said to Professor Icenstein. "Why are supernovas so important, anyway?"

"Why?" the professor repeated. "Because they are unpredictable solar masses that expand into thermal destructive forces and incinerate any molecular material in their vicinity!"

Doyle scratched his head. "You mean they get hot and blow up?"

"Of course that's what I mean!" said the professor. "Now get on with your project."

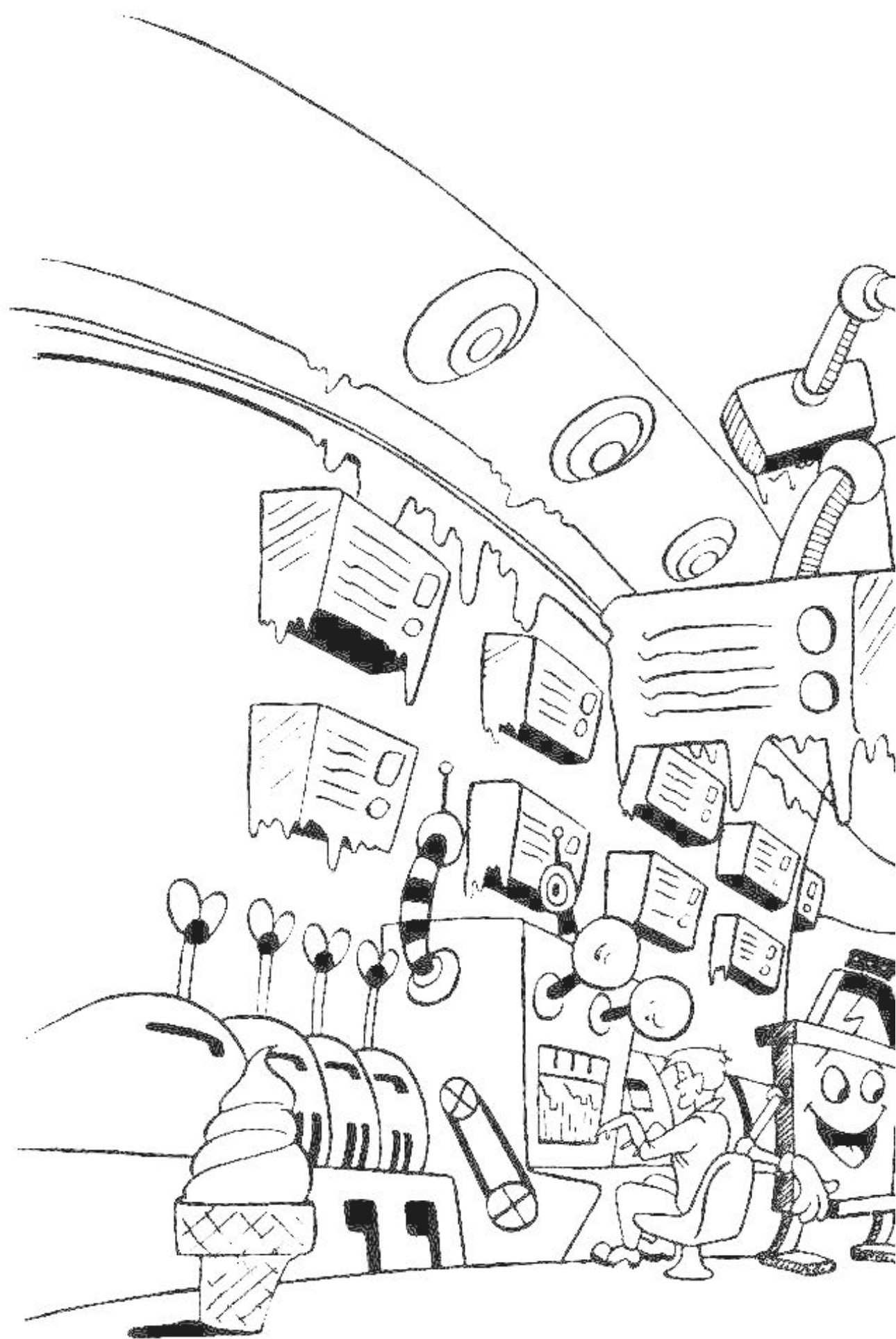
Doyle blew on his fingers, then bent once again over his terminal. He punched in a few calculations—and leaped from his seat.

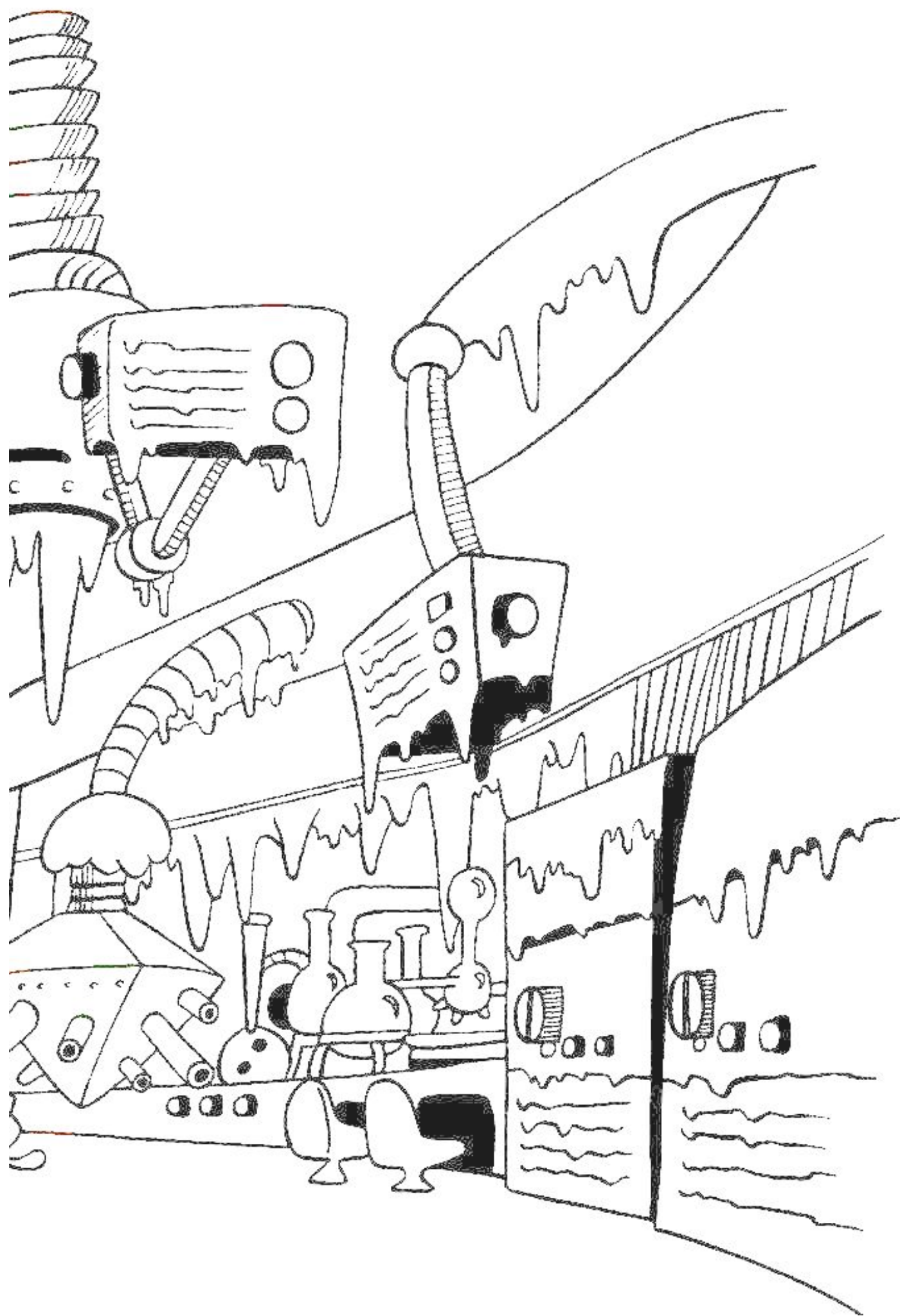
"I did it! I did it!" he yelled. "I figured out when a supernova will happen! The summer nova is going to blow up tomorrow! Isn't that great?"

Suddenly he turned pale.

"Wait a minute," he said slowly. "Isn't that where Fort Lauderdale is? Professor, what does this mean?"

The professor looked as terrified as Doyle.





"It means the combustible solar nova gases will detonate into an exploding thermal mass," he answered.

"Huh?"

"It's gonna go boom!"

"Then we've got to warn all the students there!" Doyle exclaimed. "Come on, Professor!"

"What?" the professor said. "Have you flipped your fluggle? I'll melt under the summer nova!"

"But you have to go!" pleaded Doyle. "They won't believe me! I'm just an Earthling!"

The professor stood there, thinking.

"All right," he said at last. "But I'll have to take my frozen underwear and my dry-ice denims. And we'll have to go in my refrigerated spacevan."

"Anything," Doyle said. "It can't be any colder in there than it is in here!"

Things were still heating up at Fort Lauderdale. Beef and his friends had arrived.

Beef was having a great time. There was nothing he liked better than kicking sand into peoples' faces, unless it was driving his car over their sand castles.

"Hey, watch it!" yelled Flat Freddy, Galaxy High's only two-dimensional student. Beef had just stepped on him for the third time. "Can't you do anything but walk on me?"

"That's what you get for looking like a beach towel!" Beef chortled.

Normally Aimee would have rushed to Freddy's defense, but today she was too preoccupied. For one thing, her sand fever was getting even worse. Her eyes were watering, and she couldn't stop sneezing. For another, she couldn't get Gilda's words out of her head.

"Gilda, do you really think Doyle likes me?" she asked.

"I bet he's nutzoid about you! And guys act like nuts when they're nutzoid. It wouldn't surprise me if he showed up and asked you to go steady!"

"Grosski!" Aimee shrieked. "I wouldn't want him to see me in this condition!"

"What condition?" Booley asked.

"I hope we're not too late!" Doyle said as the professor's spacevan sped toward Fort Lauderdale.

Next to him, the professor was shoveling ice down his shirt. "We must be getting close," he answered. There was a worried look on his frosty face. "It's thirty-two degrees in here. One more degree and I melt!"

In another couple of minutes Doyle spotted the beach. Carefully he steered the professor's spacevan onto an empty stretch of sand. With a sigh of relief, he turned off the engine.

"We made it, Professor! We're here!"

"Professor? . . .

"Professor!"

The passenger seat was empty—except for a pair of glasses and a puddle of water.

"Oh, no!" Doyle moaned. "Professor, speak to me! Make a bubble! Anything!"

"Blup!"

It wasn't much of an answer, but it was better than nothing. Doyle grabbed a glass from the dashboard and scooped the water into it. Then he held the glass up to his face.

"Look, until we get back to Galaxy High we'll need a code. One bubble means yes, two bubbles means no. You aren't mad at me, are you?"

"Blup! Blup! Blupblupblupblup—"

"Don't get steamed, Professor! You'll evaporate yourself."

Holding the glass carefully, Doyle stepped down from the spacevan. Aimee was huddling under her beach umbrella about twenty feet away, blistered and sneezing.

"Aimee!" Doyle called. "I got here as fast as I could."

"Doyle!" Aimee looked bashfully away. "I'm so glad. But I wish you didn't have to see me like this."

"That doesn't matter," Doyle answered. "There's something very important I have to tell you!"

"I—I think I know what it is," Aimee said. "ACHOO!"

"You do?" Doyle asked, relieved. "Then you know how hot things are going to get around here."

Now Aimee looked as if *she* were about to melt. "Oh, Doyle! I didn't think you cared!"

"Of course I care!" answered Doyle. "Let's tell the others."

"You're right," Aimee said with a giggle. "I'll tell the girls, and you tell the boys."

"Milo! Pack up your things!" Doyle yelled. "The summer nova is about to become a *super-nova*!"

Milo's six hands flew as he started cramming things into his picnic basket.

"Booey, guess what?" Aimee said. "ACHOO! I'm going steady with Doyle!"

"That's great!" squealed Booey. "Who's Doyle going steady with?"

When Aimee told Gilda the news, one of Gilda's mouths squealed with excitement. Another one began telling Aimee the latest gossip. "Guess what? Reggie had a party on his yacht, and he didn't invite Beef. So Beef and his bunch sank Reggie's boat! The whole party had to abandon ship!"

A third mouth took over. "But *your* news is even hotter. See you later, Aimee!"

"Going steady with Aimee?" Doyle snorted when Gilda ran up to congratulate him. "Who told you that?"

"I—I did!" Aimee said. She had just come back from spreading her news.

"Well, where'd you get a stupid idea like that?"

"Stupid idea! Is this another one of your jokes, Doyle?"

"No! This place is going to blow up any minute!"

Aimee was so sunburned it was hard to believe her face could get any redder. But it did.

"The only thing blowing up right now is ME!" she yelled. "How could you? First you tricked me into giving you my car—and now this!"

With a loud sneeze, she rushed away down the beach.

But except for Doyle and Gilda, no one else was paying attention. People were too busy starting to burn up!

Wendy Garbo's skin had turned a bright blue. Billy Bubblegum was melting stickily all over his towel. And Rotten Roland was so hot he was frying.

"Maybe that Earth boy was right!" Roland said as Beef scooped him off the sand with a spatula. "Maybe this place really is going to explode!"

"Let's get outa here, then!" Beef yelled. "This place *stinks!*"

The problem was that everyone wanted to get out at once. And there were exactly two vehicles on the whole planetoid—Beef's Bonk-mobile and the professor's spacevan. With Reggie's yacht at the bottom of the ocean, there just wasn't going to be enough space.

But no one cared about that.

"There's not enough room!" Doyle yelled as kids tried to cram into the professor's van. He held the glass of water containing the professor up high to keep it safe. "Why don't some of you go with Beef?"

"ZOOOOM!" came the sound overhead as Beef and his friends sped away in the Bonk-mobile.

Doyle sighed. "Well, don't panic. We'll all fit somehow!"

At last everyone was on board—or at least some part of everyone was on board. A lot of feet were sticking out of the windows.

Doyle was trying to climb in when he realized someone was missing.

"Wait!" he yelled. "Has anyone seen Aimee?"

"Forget her, Doyle, or we'll all be toasted!" Wendy screeched from the driver's seat.

"I have to go look for her!" Doyle said. He climbed back out of the van.

Wendy turned on the ignition.

"Wait! You can't leave without us!" Doyle called.

"Oh, yes we can!" Wendy's voice floated back as the spacevan blasted off.

"Great," Doyle muttered. "I'm stuck here. Aimee is gone. And the one person who might be able to help us is in this glass of water!"

Aimee was sitting under a tree blowing her nose as the professor's spacevan blasted across the sky. She turned to watch it—and saw Doyle coming toward her.

"There you are!" he called. "What are you doing here?"

"Hiding," Aimee sniffed. "Go away. I don't ever want to see you again!"

"No problem," Doyle said grimly. "We're both going to be blown to cosmic dust in ten minutes." He looked sadly at the glass of water. "Guess the professor *will* evaporate," he muttered to himself.

Aimee stared at him. "You mean that exploding nova story was *true*? But how are we going to get away?"

Just then, a man's voice came from behind them. "I'm tellin' ya, Myrtle, it's too hot! We should go to Malibu Moon!" he said.

"For thirty years you've been promising me Fort Lauderdale! We're staying, Harvey!" squawked his wife.

It was an alien couple on their second honeymoon.

Aimee and Doyle glanced at each other. Then they raced toward the couple.

"Uh, you may be interested to hear something—" Doyle began.

"It sure was lucky we could hitch that ride," Aimee said. "I never thought it would feel so great to be cold."

She and Doyle were standing in Professor Icenstein's office. They'd just finished refreezing the professor.

"Everything cool, Professor?" Doyle asked.

"No, Doyle," the professor answered. "Everything's frozen!" He spat out his false teeth. "Except there's still something wrong with my frost bite!"



Aimee smiled. "Doyle," she said, "I owe you an apology. I'd like to make it up to you. Would you like to go to a beach on our next break? One that won't blow up?"

"Sure, I'd like that!" Doyle said. "There's only one thing . . ." His eyes twinkled.

"Anything," Aimee answered.

"Can Wendy go, too?"



CHAPTER SIX

Founder's Day

Doyle walked slowly through the halls of Galaxy High. His feet were dragging. He barely noticed that, all around him, kids were running in the direction of the auditorium.

He stopped in front of his locker and yawned.

"Hey, Doyle!" Milo yelled, coming down the hall with Aimee and the Creep. "What are you doing here? We aren't having classes today. It's Founder's Day!"

"What?" Doyle asked sleepily. "Sorry. I was up all night studying for Ms. McBrain's class."

"Today's the anniversary of the founding of

Galaxy High," Aimee explained. "We're having a big assembly, with slides and speeches."

Doyle was so mad at having studied for nothing that he gave his locker an extra-hard shove. It fell over and landed on the locker next to it. The whole row of lockers toppled over like dominoes. Around the corner, the kids heard a loud crash and a yell.

Doyle groaned. *Why did I ever come to this school?* he thought. *I wish somebody could give me just one good reason!*

A moment later, Beef came running around the corner. His breakfast was dripping off his face. "I'll get you!" he roared.

Doyle, Aimee, Milo, and the Creep took off down the corridor as fast as they could. Doyle stopped outside Professor Icenstein's lab. "In here, quick!" he yelled.

The best place to hide seemed to be a large, round machine standing in the center of the room. It had a hatch that locked. The kids had just jumped inside it when Beef burst into the room. Earl Eccchhh and Rotten Roland were with him.

"What is this thing?" Beef asked, looking at the machine.

"Probably another one of Professor Icenstein's crazy inventions," Rotten Roland said. Then he spotted Doyle's pant leg sticking out of the crack in the machine's door. He elbowed Beef and pointed.

Beef's eyes lit up. "HMMMM," he said loudly. "Maybe we should see if it works!"

He twisted a dial—and the machine went crazy. Clocks started ticking and lights started flashing. Then the machine disappeared.

"Aw, gee. Ain't that terrible," Beef said calmly.

One minute, Doyle and his friends were being spun madly around in the machine. The next minute, they were lying in a heap on the floor of the machine. The spinning and humming had stopped abruptly, and there wasn't a sound from outside.

Doyle stood up shakily and opened the hatch.

They'd landed in some kind of canyon. It was a bleak spot, full of steaming craters and not much else. No life was in sight anywhere—and no Galaxy High, either.

"Where are we?" Aimee asked.

"I don't know," the Creep answered. "Th-the important thing is n-not to panic."

Suddenly there was a huge explosion right in front of them. A whole cliff blew to pieces before their eyes. As the dust settled, they saw a line of aliens coming toward them. Two were holding the high-tech weapons that had destroyed the cliff.

"Uh, I think *now's* the time to panic!" Doyle yelped.

But the leader of the aliens was calling to them.

"Welcome to Flutor!" he said solemnly.

The kids stared at one another.

"Flutor?" Aimee said. "That's impossible! Galaxy High is on Flutor! If this is Flutor, where's the school?"

The aliens shrugged. "You got us," said the leader. "But this *is* Flutor. And *you* discovered it. Congratulations! Here's your deed. You now own this planet." And the Flutorians marched away.

The four kids stared at each other. "Hey, that's great!" Doyle said. "We own Flutor!"

But Milo was shaking his head. "It's not great," he said. He sounded very upset. "We haven't traveled through space. We've traveled through *time*. Professor Icenstein always said he was going to build a time machine—and that's got to be what this is."

"All right," Doyle answered cheerfully, "it's a time machine. So let's hop into it and get back to the, uh, future."

"We can't! Even if we knew how to work the machine! Don't you see?" Milo said, wringing all six hands. "We've discovered Flutor. But we weren't supposed to. We've changed history!"

"Look! What's *that*?" Aimee broke in, pointing over Milo's shoulder.

It was a flat spaceship that looked like a flying pancake. It was dragging an intergalactic U-Haul behind it. As they watched, the spaceship

crashed into the surface of Flutor and flipped over.

"It's probably the people who were *meant* to discover Flutor," Milo said glumly.

Suddenly a section of the ship started to open. The kids dashed behind a rock.

Two people climbed out of the pancake and peered at the empty landscape. Aimee's eyes widened. *Could it be—?*

Yes! It was Luigi, the owner of Galaxy High's pizza parlor—and Ms. McBrain, the school principal! They looked thirty years younger, but Aimee would have recognized them anywhere. She burst out of the hiding place and ran toward them.

Luigi stared at her. "An Earthling?" he said. Then he saw Doyle, Milo, and the Creep. "Two Earthlings, a Venusian, and a Creep? I must have taken a wrong turn at Albuquerque Nebula. Say, what is this place?"

"It's Flutor," Milo answered. "Uh—aren't you here to discover it?"

"Veepers, no!" said the young Ms. McBrain. "We're on our way to the Bagelbah system. Luigi's opening the first intergalactic pancake house there. And I'm Biddy, his star waitress!"

"Come on, Biddy," Luigi interrupted. "We've got to fix the stardrive." They headed back inside the ship.

The Galaxy High gang was alone again.

"Luigi opening a pancake house?" Aimee

said. "Ms. McBrain a waitress? This doesn't make sense!"

"They were supposed to find this place first," Milo cried. "Now they're going to leave! Galaxy High will never happen!"

"Oh, yes, it will!" Aimee said stoutly. "This is our fault, and we're going to fix it! All we have to do is convince Luigi to open a pizza parlor here instead. And we have to get Biddy back to the Ms. McBrain we know—a high-school principal."

Doyle stared at her. "You've lost it, Aimee."

She leaned over and jabbed a finger into his chest. "Well, if we don't do something, Doyle Cleverlobe, we've got no future. Remember?"

Doyle gulped. "You and Creep talk to Biddy," he said. "Milo and I will tackle Luigi."

Inside the starship, Luigi was trying to fix the stardrive. "I'm gonna plasmerize this thing!" he bellowed as the kids came into sight. Ms. McBrain calmly handed him a tool.

Doyle strode forward. "Maybe you won't need your stardrive!" he said.

Luigi was hopping on one foot "What's the matter with you?" he asked. "Your pancakes stacked wrong?"

Milo uttered a loud, false laugh. "Pancakes?" he squealed. "Nobody eats those anymore. Pizza's the new food!"

"Pizza?" Luigi looked confused. "What's pizza?"

Nearby, Aimee and the Creep were talking just loud enough for Biddy McBrain to overhear.

"Let's see, Creep," Aimee said slowly. "Five thousand megacredits—how much is that in decacreds?"

The Creep shrugged. "Beats me, Aimee."

"Biddy, maybe *you* know," Aimee said. "No, forget it. You're not smart enough."

"Not smart enough!" Biddy sounded outraged—much more like the Ms. McBrain they knew. "Well! For your information, young lady, the answer is ten thousand, five hundred and sixty-one decacreds."

"Biddy! It *is* you! You *are* smart!" Aimee exclaimed.

But Biddy looked horrified. "Who told you I was smart? Where did you hear that terrible rumor?" she asked. She burst into tears.

"We didn't mean to hurt your feelings," the Creep said, fluttering around her.

"What's wrong?" Aimee asked. "What did I say?"

Biddy dabbed at her eyes. "You—you called me smart," she sobbed. "And I am . . ."

"So what's wrong with that?" Aimee asked gently.

"On my planet, women aren't supposed to be smart," Biddy sobbed. "In fact, it's against the law!"

Doyle and Milo were still working on Luigi. "Pizza's the thing for you, Luigi," Doyle said earnestly. "You'll make tons of money!"

"Did you say money?" Suddenly Luigi looked more interested.

"*And customers,*" Milo added. "Customers from all over the galaxy."

"You guys are space-happy!" protested Luigi. "Where am I going to get customers on a place like this?"

Doyle smiled. "From the high school!"

"That's right!" Aimee called as she, the Creep, and Ms. McBrain came up to them. "Luigi, you've got to give us a chance. We'll prove this idea can work!"

"Yeah!" Doyle said. "We'll prove—Aimee, how will we prove it?"

"Advertise," Aimee said. "*If* Luigi will let us use his communications console."

Luigi threw up his hands. "Okay. Come on, you crazy kids."

"What are you up to, Aimee?" Milo asked under his breath.

"You'll find out," Aimee said. "Now, you and the Creep convert Luigi's pancake house into a pizza parlor. *I've* got a broadcast to make! I'm sending a message to all the families in the galaxy, telling them to come here."

"But you mustn't!" protested Ms. McBrain. "Everyone in this galaxy hates everyone else."

Aimee smiled. "All the more reason they need Galaxy High," she answered.

"Galaxy High? What's that?"

"I'll tell you later. Let's start broadcasting!"

The pancake house had become a sparkling new pizza parlor. Milo had the pizzas ready to go into the oven. The place was packed.

The problem was that everyone was fighting—just as Ms. McBrain had warned.

"Daddy," whined a mother Octapoid, "look! There's Roboids here! And Groozles!"

"Don't worry, Momma," her husband said. "I'll just ask the manager to get rid of that space-rubble."

"What did you say, tentacle breath?" asked the nearest Roboid.

"Hey!" Luigi yelled. "This is a restaurant, not a war zone. You want to fight, do it outside!"

Every adult in the place marched out the door.

"Wait! What about us, Pop?" called an Octopoid boy.

"You kids stay here! We'll fix this!" his father shouted back.

Now the only customers in the pizza parlor were alien kids. They stood there awkwardly, eyeing one another.

Suddenly Doyle thought he recognized two alien girls. "Booey! Gilda! What are you doing here?" he said.

"Booey? Gilda? Who are they?" asked the Bubblehead curiously. "My name is Blinky."

"I'm Greta," chimed in her five-mouthed friend. "And you're cute," added another of her mouths.

"Hey! Aren't you an Earthling?" an ugly voice behind Doyle shouted.

Doyle whipped around. "Beef! It's you!" he gasped.

"No, I'm Biff Bonk," said an alien who looked just like Beef. "And my dad says Earthlings stink!"

Doyle had had enough. He picked up a pizza and hurled it into Biff's face. Biff growled and hurled one back at Doyle.

"FOOD WAR!" the Octapoid boy yelled.

"Stop it!" shouted Luigi. "You're killing my restaura—"

Splat! A pizza hit him in the mouth. Luigi wiped it off, looking furious. Then his expression changed. "Hey! This pizza's pretty good!" he said.

Aimee was furious. "Nice work, Doyle!" she said. "Now you've got the kids fighting, too!"

"It's not my fault!" Doyle said. "Did you see those kids? Fighting's natural for them!"

Milo sighed. "They're obviously the parents of the kids we know in the future. If only we could talk to them . . ."

"We can!" There was a new determination in Biddy McBrain's voice. She strode to the center of the room, pulling off her waitress's apron as she went.

"CHILDREN!" she shouted. Her voice was full of authority. "Stop this at *once*!"

There was instant silence.

"I've never seen such behavior!" Ms.

McBrain said. "Now I want you to forget the differences between you and act like civilized people . . . or things, as the case may be."

"Who is that dweebie?" asked Biff.

"That," Aimee said, "is Ms. Biddy McBrain. Principal of Galaxy High."

"Galaxy High? What's that?" Blinky Bubblehead asked.

"If you'll all take your seats and behave, we can explain," Ms. McBrain said.

"I don't believe it," Doyle murmured to Milo. "Ms. McBrain's really doing it. The kids have stopped fighting!"

". . . And if we all go to school together, we can learn to live in peace!" Aimee was saying. The alien kids all began clapping.

"Yeah, the kids have stopped fighting," Milo said to Doyle. "But what are we going to do about their parents?"

Just then, there was a loud burst of fire-power from outside.

The kids rushed to the widows. "Oh, no," Blinky said. "They've gotten out the weapons."

Aimee looked out the window and groaned. A huge new canyon had been blasted out of the ground. "It's terrible!" she said.

"It sure is," Blinky agreed. "Here come the police!"

Outside, the parents gathered around the intergalactic police officer. "Okay, who started

this?" he asked as the kids came outside to see what they could do.

The Octapoid father and his Roboid enemy looked at each other. Then they turned and pointed to the Galaxy High gang.

"They did!" they exclaimed.

"Us? Wait a—" Doyle sputtered.

The police officer glared at him. "You got something to say?"

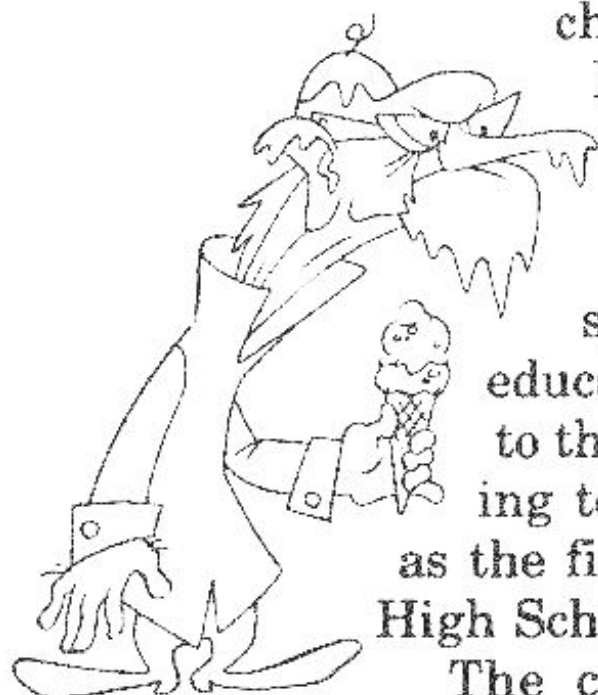
Aimee spoke up. "I have something to say. We were just trying to convince these people to build a high school here. But they'd rather fight with each other!"

The alien teens gathered around her.

"Galaxy High's a good idea," Blinky told them.

"And we want it!" Greta said.

All the other teens nodded. They began to chant. "We want Galaxy High! Galaxy High!"



"The differences between us don't matter," Ms. McBrain spoke up. "Coplanetary education could bring peace to this galaxy. And I'm willing to dedicate my life to it as the first principal of Galaxy High School."

The crowd cheered wildly.

"Do you need a science instructor?" called a

familiar voice. "I won the No-Bull prize on my world."

It was Professor Icenstein!

Milo sighed happily. "Now we can go back to our own time!"

"Why?" Doyle asked. "Did you just figure out how to work the time machine?"

"No," Milo said. "But we can get the professor to help us. I'll bet he'll be surprised to find out how much he knows about it!"

An hour later Aimee, Doyle, Milo, and the Creep climbed out of the time machine and found themselves back in the professor's icy lab.

"We're back to normal. I hope," Milo said.

"Milo! I just remembered something!" Doyle groaned. "Beef. He's still out to plasmerize us!"

Aimee gasped, but Milo was grinning.

"No problem!" he said. "I set the dials so we'd come back ten minutes before he got mad at us. It's as if it never happened!"

"Milo, you're a genius," Aimee said as they stepped out of the lab into the hall. "Well, I see the old place still looks the same." She added, "Better, even!"

"Excuse me, students!" cried Ms. McBrain. She was coming down the hall, pulling a slide projector on a Hovercart. "Today is Founder's Day, you know. I've got so much to do."

As they moved out of her way, Ms. McBrain stopped suddenly.

"Is something wrong, Ms. McBrain?" Aimee asked.

Ms. McBrain shook her head. "It's nothing. Seeing you all standing there like that just reminded me of another group of young people I met long ago. On the original Founder's Day, in fact."

The gang sneaked looks at each other.

"You might say they were the real founders of Galaxy High," Ms. McBrain went on. "Without them, this school would never have been built."

Doyle couldn't resist asking, "What happened to them, Ms. McBrain?"

She shook her head. "It's odd. They disappeared shortly after the school was created. I've always regretted that I never got to thank them. . . . Oh, well, I must be off."

She moved on down the hall.

"Oh, Ms. McBrain—" Aimee called.

She turned.

"Yes, Aimee?"

Aimee, Doyle, Milo, and the Creep all answered at the same time.

"You're welcome," they said.

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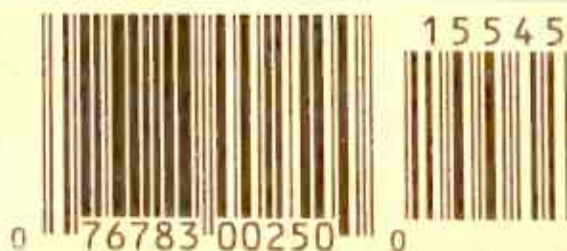


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